



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Use of Opioid Settlement Funds

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move approval of the recommended use of Opioid settlement funds over the next 17 years.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The state of Oregon is participating in a national opioid lawsuit against manufacturers. In 2021, nationwide settlements resolved all opioid suits brought by states and local political subdivisions, awarding \$26 billion for distribution over 18 years. The settlement amount Deschutes County would receive is estimated at \$6.7 million over that time.

Since 2000 there have been over 500,000 USA opioid related deaths in the US, ranking highest in those aged 24-35. The opioid crisis resulted in lost wages and other health impacts and costs for individuals, families and communities. Litigants claimed the industry “grossly misrepresented the risks of long-term use for persons with chronic pain, “and “failed to properly monitor suspicious orders of those prescription drugs- all of which contributed to the current opioid epidemic.” The number of overdose deaths continues to rise. In fact, between 2018 and 2021 the rate of overdose deaths in Central Oregon increased by 85%. Preliminary 2022 data puts Central Oregon on track for a 100% increase.

Health Services proposes the settlement funds to address local opioid use using a three-tiered approach: 1) add capacity and expand existing efforts by adding targeted expert Opioid Use Disorder prevention services, 2) increase coordination of surveillance and overdose prevention and harm reduction efforts and 3) sustain existing interventions. These three strategic uses would allow Health Services to:

- Improve awareness and utilization of opioid and other drug prevention knowledge;
- Reduce adolescent drug use;
- Ensure real-time surveillance systems to quickly respond to overdose emergencies;
- Improve coordination with internal and external entities working to reduce overdose and opioid use harms; and

- Use existing interventions like the Stabilization Center, which serves as an alternative to hospital emergency departments for persons with opioid use disorder and any co-occurring substance use disorder or mental health conditions and connects individuals with treatment to help them stabilize in their community to improve quality of life.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

\$6.7 million over 18 years; see attached fiscal analysis.

ATTENDANCE:

Janice Garceau, Health Services Director

Holly Harris, Behavioral Health Director

Heather Kaisner, Public Health Director

Cheryl Smallman, Health Services Business Officer

Jessica Jacks, Health Services Program Manager, Prevention and Health Promotion