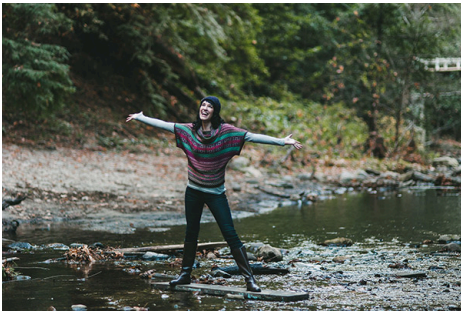


USU Extension Awarded \$1 Million Grant for Opioid Initiative | CEHS

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Utah State University Extension was recently awarded a \$1 million grant for the Tribal and Rural Opioid Initiative from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

The grant will fund an integrated opioid response effort that provides prevention, treatment, and recovery resources in Tooele County, with additional tribal outreach in the Uintah Basin area.

Sandra H. Sulzer is a professor in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services and the director of the Office of Health Equity and Community Engagement. According to Dr. Sulzer, rural communities are often critically underserved when receiving healthcare resources, which also extends to addiction prevention and treatment.

“The Centers for Disease Control shows that Tooele County currently has the second highest opioid-related mortality rate in the state,” she said. “Opioid-related emergency visits are also particularly high in Tooele at 1.3 times the state average.”

Sulzer said these challenges extend to reservations as well.

“By joining with tribal partners through the Tribal and Rural Opioid Initiative, we will better engage with groups often left out of prevention efforts,” she said. “The initiative will also target the Uintah Basin.”

Maren Wright Voss, USU Extension professional practice assistant professor of health and wellness, will serve as the Tooele County director for the program. She said she

is pleased to get to work with the Tooele Rural Opioid Healthcare Consortium founding partners to help bring critical prevention and recovery services to the area.

Voss said the consortium was founded by USU Extension in Tooele County, joining Valley Behavioral Health, the Tooele County Health Department and Mountain West Medical Center Emergency Department.

“The grant funding will amp up disease prevention efforts and offer alternative pain management programs which are so needed for responsible opioid management,” she said. “It will also address gaps in resources often found in rural areas like Tooele.”

The Rural Communities Opioid Response Implementation Grant runs from September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2022.