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As Overdose Climbs, MAC and Vital Strategies Release Roadmap for Michigan Governments to Use Opioid Settlement to Reduce Overdose

Guide Emphasizes Partnership with Hardest-Hit Communities

Lansing, Mich. — In 2021, nearly 108,000 people died from a drug overdose in the United States, a new peak in the crisis. Michigan lost more than 3,000 individuals to overdose and had approximately 31,000 nonfatal emergency department visits due to overdose in 2021. The state of Michigan is slated to receive nearly \$800 million over 18 years as part of the opioid litigation settlements, and approximately half of these funds will go directly to county and municipal governments, providing an opportunity to strengthen evidence-based, accessible resources in local communities.

To support local governments, the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) and Vital Strategies have produced a *Michigan Opioid Settlement Funds Toolkit: A Guide for Local Spending*. [This new toolkit](#) provides local governments, community organizations and health care providers with guidance on how to utilize opioid settlement funds. The executive summary can be accessed [here](#). MAC is available to assist local leaders through this process by providing [technical assistance](#).

“MAC and Vital Strategies’ partnership has resulted in this excellent toolkit and staff who can provide real-time support to members on their opioid abatement strategies. We’re proud that MAC can support its members – and Michigan – in combatting the growing and complex overdose crisis.” said Stephan Currie, executive director of the Michigan Association of Counties.

The toolkit contains several components, including:

- **Settlements overview**, which provides information on the opioid litigation settlements, the state and local agreement, estimated funds per county, future funds and the tribal government settlements.
- **Statistical overview and local data** describing the scope of the overdose crisis, providing state-level data and where to access local data.

- **Overview of spending principles** laid out by Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, as well as indicators for spending readiness.
- **Steps for spending**, which includes a framework for jurisdictions to begin their process of allocating opioid settlement funds, and general steps to follow during this process.
- **Strategies for spending**, which outlines key strategies from the State of Michigan, Exhibit E of the current settlement agreement and Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.
- **Resources and practical tools** around research and evidence-based programming to aid in local planning and spending are linked throughout the document.

Local governments will find guidance in the toolkit for stakeholder engagement, monitoring and accountability for the life-course of the spending process, information-gathering to assess and understand the needs of the community, and determining the process for moving forward. The new toolkit also provides strategies for engaging people who have lived experience, a critical component for success that is often overlooked.

“The landmark opioid settlement funds are an opportunity to halt the momentum of the overdose crisis in Michigan communities,” said Julie Rwan, Senior Technical Advisor at Vital Strategies. “This toolkit is timely and targeted, a roadmap for local governments seeking to develop spending plans centered in health equity and in collaboration with the communities hardest-hit by overdose.”

About MAC

MAC is the only statewide organization dedicated to the representation of all county commissioners in Michigan. MAC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advances education, communication and cooperation among county government officials in Michigan. MAC is the counties’ voice at the state and federal level, providing legislative support on key issues affecting counties.

Learn more about MAC <https://micounties.org/>

About Vital Strategies

Vital Strategies is a global health organization that believes every person should be protected by a strong public health system. In November 2021, Bloomberg Philanthropies announced a five-year, \$120 million investment to help combat the overdose crisis in the hard-hit states of Kentucky, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina and Wisconsin. The initiative builds on work of the previous three years in Michigan and Pennsylvania, launched in 2018 with \$50 million, and expands the work to promote improved federal policies. The partnership between Vital Strategies, Pew Charitable Trusts, Johns Hopkins University, CDC Foundation, and Global Health Advocacy Incubator is helping to strengthen and scale up evidence-based, data-driven policies and interventions to reduce overdose risks and save lives.

Learn more about [Vital Strategies’ Overdose Prevention Program](#)

