



Working Together in Healthy QUIN Counties

January Newsletter

In Healthy QUIN Counties, we team up to improve ways to prevent and recover from substance use problems. It's important to know how money is being used in our area. By sharing information about how counties use funds from opioid settlements and other grants, we can learn from each other and work better together.

Pennington County Multidisciplinary Taskforce: Helping Kids in Need

The Pennington County Multidisciplinary Taskforce is a group that helps kids who are having a tough time at home or might get into trouble with drugs. Amanda Smith is a specialist who works hard to guide these kids back toward a better path.

- **Helping Kids:** Right now, Pennington County is helping over 30 kids who have problems with drugs or don't have a stable home.
- **Making Sure It Works:** The taskforce keeps an eye on how well things are going to make sure money is spent wisely in the future.
- **Money:** Businesses, organizations, or families can get money if the committee agrees.

Miranda Solem from a health clinic oversees these efforts, working with a team. All efforts are funded by the opioid settlement dollars. Another group called Community Strong also helps by focusing on mental health, talking to people in the community, organizing events, and inviting speakers to talk.



Helping Hands in Roseau County: Team EPIC's Mission

Team EPIC in Roseau is working hard to keep their important work going, even after their funding ended in the fall of 2025. They aim to help people stay away from drug problems. Some of the things they do include:

- **Coordinating events:** Organizing days when people can safely return unused medications
- **Disseminating information:** Sharing details about locations for dropping off medication
- **Educating the public:** Teaching about and distributing Naloxone, a lifesaving medication for emergencies
- **Hosting discussions:** Giving talks about drug use and its implications
- **Providing resources:** Offering information about where to get help with substance-related issues
- **Offering training:** Providing training and educational opportunities for community members
- **Establishing collaborations:** Building partnerships with other organizations to enhance support

They also want to help stop the misuse of prescription drugs in homes where people aged 75 and older live. Money from the opioid settlement funds help them do all this work. Erika Howell, a Public Health Educator, and Steph Heppner lead these efforts.



Kittson County: Helping Our Community Stay Healthy

The Kittson County Substance Use Prevention Team works hard to help people with mental health and substance use problems. They do this through different activities, such as:

- **Community Events:** Organizing gatherings to bring people together

- **Naloxone Training:** Teaching first responders and community members how to use naloxone
- **Mini Grants:** Giving money to support projects that fight substance use
- **Special Funds:** Helping programs like those for police dogs

The team also gives out naloxone and kits to safely get rid of pills. They help people find the money and resources needed to get treatment for drug use problems and encourage doctors to learn more about using suboxone, a treatment for addiction.

They are also interested in:

- **Rules for Stores:** Making laws for places that sell things like cannabis
- **Healthy QUIN Counties CSUP Grant:** Using this grant to teach people about staying away from drugs through social media

The Regional Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator is important in sharing mental health information at talks and community events. All these efforts are paid for by the opioid settlement funds and led by Jeanna Kujava, the Public Health Director for Kittson County.



Marshall County: Supporting Mental Health

The Marshall County Thriving Group is working hard to make sure everyone in the community feels good and stays healthy.

- **Support:** The organization supports both children and adults by hosting engaging events and inviting speakers to address mental health topics.
- **Information Gathering:** They gather essential information from schools to improve public health initiatives.
- **Collaboration:** By collaborating with diverse partners, they collect data through targeted crisis calls.

- **Strategy Development:** They are creating strategies to offer support to schools and communities during challenging times, such as in the aftermath of a tragedy.

They also care about kids who have tough times, especially those with parents in jail or who don't have a stable home. All efforts are funded through fundraising and other grants. Frances Tougas, the Public Health Director at North Valley Health Center, leads these efforts. Other initiatives in the county include hiring and supporting Taya Olson, a jail care coordinator and early interventionist (e.g., diversion), using the opioid settlement dollars. She supports families with the Love and Logic program, truancy, and tracks mental health hold and commitments to better understand needs in the county.



Red Lake County: Fighting Drug Problems Together

The Red Lake County Opioid Taskforce is working hard to help people with drug problems by doing different things:

- **Harm Reduction Kits:** They gave out 36 kits with important items like naloxone and test strips to help people who use drugs.
- **Nasal Naloxone Kits:** They provided over 56 kits to schools to help with laws requiring naloxone in schools.
- **Mini Grants:** They gave more than \$3,000 to support community projects aiming to prevent drug problems.
- **Naloxone Education:** They can teach about naloxone at schools, businesses, and community members.
- **Flex Funds for Families:** They help families pay for things when someone is getting treatment for drug issues for one month.
- **Support Groups:** They are creating a Narcotics Anonymous group for support.

- **Community Outreach:** They organize events like medication take-back days to connect with more community members and prevent drug problems.

These efforts are funded by money from opioid settlements, with guidance from Miranda Griechen, a Public Health Educator.



Healthy Horizons: Statewide Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

The State Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) is a plan to help people in our communities be healthier. We're just starting, but SHIP will help us figure out how to solve important health problems and keep everyone well for a long time.

What's Next?

In the next few months, we'll start talking to people who can help and come up with steps to make sure local projects match SHIP's goals. Watch for updates as we get going on this important work. Ava Novacek, our new SHIP coordinator, oversees organizing all these efforts!



Healthy QUIN Counties: Fighting Substance Use in Our Counties

Healthy QUIN Counties is working hard to address substance use using a special grant from Minnesota. We serve Pennington, Roseau, Red Lake, Marshall, and Kittson Counties. This grant helps us focus on preventing marijuana and other substance use. All these efforts are

funded by the Cannabis Substance Use Prevention Grant. These efforts are led by Erika Howell and Miranda Griechen.

What We're Doing Now

We have two public health educators helping our five counties. Here's what they're up to:

- Collecting information to understand substance use
- Supporting and joining local groups that help prevent substance use
- Building relationships with important members of the community
- Giving out naloxone to businesses and partners
- Training/presentations to businesses and partners
- Distribution of cabinet locks for safe storage of substances
- Sharing ways to prevent substance use
- Helping schools teach about cannabis
- Creating a youth board to help with prevention
- Talking to people at community events
- Running a social media campaign, *Stronger Than The Substance*, to raise awareness and connect families

Our Future Plans

We hope to:

- Create interventions needed for youth, parents/caregivers, and community members
- Work more with our community and others
- Provide better data on substance use in our area
- Make it easier for people to get treatment for substance problems or prevent them.



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