

**INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE  
2023 RICK SMITH INJURY PREVENTION AWARD  
SISSETON WAHPETON OYATE  
TRIBAL OPIOID RESPONSE TEAM**



Congratulations to the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Team at the Asniyapi Clinic for receiving the 2023 Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award. The TOR Team members include: Jocelyn (Josie) Deutsch Reints, Certified Nurse Practitioner, Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Provider; Aaron Erdrich, Registered Nurse; Kimberly Keeble, Care Connector; Joshua Max, Project Manager/Data Specialist; and Sara DeCoteau, Project Director. The Team was nominated by the Great Plains Area Indian Health Service Office of Environmental Health & Engineering, Division of Environmental Health Service.

In 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) population had the highest drug overdose death rates in both 2020 and 2021, at rates of 42.5 and 56.6 deaths per 100,000, respectively. The AI/AN population also experienced a 33% increase in drug overdose deaths from 2020 through 2021.

The TOR Team recognized and addressed this overdose crisis in Tribal communities by increasing access to FDA-approved medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD), as well as supporting the continuum of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support services for OUD.

The TOR Team, Asniyapi Clinic, utilized evidence-based, evidence-informed, and culturally relevant interventions including:

- 1) Naloxone (NARCAN) Kit Training
- 2) Medication Safe distribution
- 3) Fentanyl Test Strips
- 4) Other Prevention Education

**NARCAN Kit Training and Distribution**

A total of 144 NARCAN kits were distributed to the following: First Responders; other workforce employees; Substance Use Disorder treatment clients; and family and friends. An additional 12 kits were obtained from the South Dakota Department of Health and distributed. A total of 291 First Responders, Police Officers, Security and other employees were trained in the use of NARCAN kits. A total of 131 Key Community Sector people were also trained in the use of the NARCAN kits. This included Substance Use Disorder treatment clients and family and friends. There were 23 overdose reversals reported to staff.

### **Medication Safes**

A medication safe (i.e., medication lock box) is a secure container that ensures medicine is only accessible to the prescription holder and may reduce overdose or misuse of medication. The medication safes were purchased for TOR Asniyapi Clinic participants. Because the participants are prescribed Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD), either through the TOR Asniyapi Clinic or another provider they are provided with information on how to use the medication safes. By the end of December 2023, 35 program participants received medication safes which is 50% of the two-year target. It is anticipated that medication safes will be distributed to 70 participants by September 2024.

### **Fentanyl Test Strips**

A total of 100 fentanyl test strips were purchased to be distributed to the program participants. Fentanyl tests strips are a harm reduction strategy and recently became legal in the summer of 2023. The TOR Asniyapi Clinic distributed the six fentanyl test strips to program participants. It was determined that these fentanyl test strips were not feasible for the average person to use due to the chemistry involved. At this time, it was deemed more suitable for fentanyl test strips to be used by law enforcement or health care personnel. A total of 15 test strips were distributed.

### **Prevention Education**

Using mass media messages via Facebook, public health advisories and campaigns proved to be an effective way to market events, announcements, and positive messages to the public. Education activities such as tabling events, presentations, and subject matter expert were also provided to the community. At the end of the year, there were 76 mass media messages reaching 8,085 people. The 21 education activities reached 820 adults community members and 181 school-age children.

Extensive work was also completed by the TOR Team and Clinic by establishing priorities for program planning and providing strategic context for evaluation of grant-funding opportunities. The TOR Asniyapi Clinic staff also collaborated with several Tribal and Non-Tribal programs recognizing the need to build sustainable partnerships. These partnerships led to building a lasting and sustainable program while building the capacity within the community to address these injury issues.