

# Cumberland County Impact Report Narratives for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Each local government that receives opioid settlement funds is asked to share an Annual Settlement Update describing how they have made use of settlement funds during each fiscal year. For each strategy funded, local governments also share additional narratives to describe their progress and successes (success information is optional for some local governments). Across all funded strategies, each local government selects one progress narrative and one success narrative to spotlight each fiscal year.

Cumberland County provided the following narrative information for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (July 2023 through June 2024):

## Annual Settlement Update

In response to the opioid crisis that has deeply impacted our community, Cumberland County Department of Public Health has established the Cumberland-Fayetteville Opioid Response Team (C-FORT). This dedicated team fosters collaboration among local government and community stakeholders to enhance our opioid response through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach focused on recovery support, resources, and safer practices.

Through this partnership, C-FORT partners applied through an RFA process approved by County Commissioners and received funding to support seven of the twelve approved strategies. We invested in community education initiatives designed to raise awareness about the risks associated with opioid use and promoting safer practices. Additionally, we prioritized the development of a robust recovery support network, establishing peer support groups and connecting individuals in recovery with job training and employment opportunities, creating a sense of community, belonging, and normalcy for those on their recovery journey.

Through these targeted initiatives, the use of the opioid settlement funds has been instrumental in addressing the immediate needs of those affected while laying the ground for long-term solutions and a healthier community. Short-term funded opportunities included recovery support services, recovery housing support, employment or vocational linkages and supports, criminal justice diversion programs and reentry services.

As a part of these strategies, Cumberland County implemented Naloxone Distribution and Syringe Service programs, as well as a multi-year Medication-Assisted Treatment Program within the Detention Center.

## Strategy Spotlights

### ❖ Exhibit A, Strategy 7: Naloxone Distribution

#### Progress Narrative

Distribution Metrics:

- Distributed a total of 1492 naloxone kits.
- Reached 749 individuals through community events and outreach initiatives.

- Provided 812 training sessions on naloxone administration, equipping participants with the necessary skills to respond to overdoses.

#### Increased Accessibility:

- Expanded distribution sites to include the Cumberland County Department of Public Health and Cape Fear Valley Health Pharmacy, and a naloxone vending machine at the Cumberland County Detention Center, significantly increasing accessibility for high-risk populations.

The naloxone distribution program has made significant strides in combating opioid overdose in our community. By enhancing accessibility and providing education, we aim to empower individuals to save lives and foster a supportive environment for those affected by substance use.

### ❖ **Exhibit A, Strategy 7: Naloxone Distribution**

#### **Success Narrative**

Cumberland County successfully enhanced access to naloxone by installing a naloxone vending machine at the Cumberland County Detention Center. Public health department staff collaborated with various community groups to provide overdose education and naloxone to faith-based organizations, schools, law enforcement, and fire departments. This effort ultimately enabled the county to qualify for targeted funding to support community-based education and outreach.

## **Progress and Success Narratives for All Funded Strategies**

### ❖ **Exhibit A, Strategy 10: Criminal Justice Diversion Programs**

#### **Progress Narrative**

##### Key Achievements:

##### Participant Engagement:

- Enrolled a total of 88 individuals in pre-arrest diversion programs.
- Facilitated 17 diversion placements into substance use and mental health treatment programs.

##### Collaboration with Local Agencies:

- Partnered with law enforcement agencies to establish protocols for diversion at the point of arrest through the Fayetteville Police Department and NC Harm Reduction Coalition Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program.
- Worked with treatment providers to ensure seamless access to care for participants.
- Engaged community organizations to provide additional support services, such as housing and employment assistance.

The criminal justice diversion program has made significant progress in redirecting individuals towards treatment rather than incarceration. By fostering collaboration among local agencies and providing essential support services, we aim to create a more rehabilitative and supportive environment for those in need.

## **Success Narrative**

Joey, a 40-year-old Fayetteville resident, had been living in a tent in the woods for years, struggling with polysubstance use. He had survived multiple overdoses and was stuck in a cycle of chaotic drug use with no clear path forward. An outstanding warrant prevented him from accessing vital services, securing employment, or making meaningful progress toward stability.

Joey's challenges were many, including being unhoused and exposed to high-risk environments; having a history of substance use disorder; lacking transportation, work attire, or stable housing; and possessing legal barriers that prevent access to services and employment.

Through Fayetteville Police Department Faith in Action initiative, Joey was connected with the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC) Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program, which is supported by opioid settlement funds. NCHRC worked with the District Attorney's office to resolve Joey's outstanding warrant, removing a major barrier to progress. He was placed in transitional housing, giving him immediate stability. He also received harm reduction-based case management, including access to naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and peer support.

Through NCHRC recovery support services, Joey was connected with employment opportunities suited to his situation. He was provided with transportation to his job interview and orientation, eliminating logistical challenges. NCHRC also supplied him with work boots and a job uniform, ensuring he had everything he needed to start work.

With this comprehensive support, Joey secured full-time employment and began rebuilding his life. His newfound stability allowed him to move out of transitional housing and secure his own place independently.

Joey is now fully employed and financially self-sustaining. He has stable housing and no longer faces the daily uncertainty of homelessness. His story is a testament to the effectiveness of harm reduction, diversion, and wraparound support services in helping individuals reclaim their lives. By addressing barriers like legal issues, transportation, and employment readiness, this program created a lasting impact beyond just immediate relief.

Joey's journey demonstrates the power of compassionate, community-based solutions funded by the opioid settlement. Instead of being lost in the system, he was given a real chance at success, and he made the most of it. (Names and identifying details have been altered to preserve anonymity)

## **❖ Exhibit A, Strategy 11: Addiction Treatment for Incarcerated Persons**

### **Progress Narrative**

Key Achievements:

Participant Engagement:

- Enrolled a total of 76 incarcerated individuals in the treatment program.

Treatment Services:

- Provided medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for 76 individuals.

Collaboration with Correctional Facilities:

- Partnered with Cumberland County Detention Center to ensure integration of treatment services into the daily operations.
- Trained 1 Licensed Clinical Social Worker and 1 Peer Support Specialist on recognizing signs of substance use disorders and the importance of treatment, enhancing support for participants.

The addiction treatment program for incarcerated persons has made significant strides in providing effective treatment and support. By addressing substance use disorders within correctional facilities, we are working towards better recovery outcomes and reducing recidivism rates.

### **Success Narrative**

The first year of the Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) program at the Cumberland County Detention Center marked a pivotal step in expanding access to treatment, enhancing capacity, and establishing effective referral pathways for detainees with opioid use disorder. To support the program's rollout, new staff members were brought on board, including a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and a Peer Support Specialist (PSS). A key factor in the program's success has been the development of strong referral networks, linking detainees to both internal providers and external community partners. This approach has been essential in helping individuals stay on their treatment regimen. Additionally, the team has worked diligently to connect individuals with external MAT providers, mental health services, housing support, and substance use recovery programs upon their release.

### **❖ Exhibit A, Strategy 12: Reentry Programs**

#### **Progress Narrative**

Key Achievements:

Participant Engagement:

- Enrolled a total of 838 individuals in the reentry program.
- Conducted 267 initial assessments to identify individual needs and create personalized reintegration plans.
- Conducted 8010 case management meetings.

The reentry program has made significant strides in supporting individuals as they transition back into the community. By addressing key areas such as employment, housing, and health, through detailed assessments, we aim to promote successful reintegration and reduce recidivism.

#### **Success Narrative**

Case #5324 has a longstanding history of substance use disorder, dating back to the age of 15. Motivated by a desire to make positive changes in his life, he sought treatment at Carolina Treatment Center. 5324 has a criminal history, including felony convictions for drug-related offenses, and has been incarcerated in the past. Throughout his time at Carolina Treatment Center, 5324 has demonstrated substantial progress in his recovery, successfully refraining from illicit drug use, managing cravings and urges, and developing skills to cope with his emotions and thoughts. Additionally, he has overcome various challenges and expressed a strong desire to become a Peer Support Specialist (PSS), further demonstrating his commitment to personal growth and helping others. Grant funds were utilized to cover the costs of his Peer Support Specialist Certification, which ultimately led to his employment as a PSS and providing services to those in need.

## ❖ **Exhibit A, Strategy 3: Recovery Support Services**

### **Progress Narrative**

The recovery support services grantees have made significant strides supporting individuals on their recovery journeys. With continued commitment and collaboration, we aim to enhance our impact and promote sustainable recovery outcomes.

Key Achievements:

Participant Engagement:

- Served a total of 981 individuals.
- Made 2,840 total contacts.
- Successfully referred 232 participants to addiction treatment.
- Connected 506 participants to recovery supports.
- Referred 833 participants to harm reduction services.
- Assisted 57 participants in accessing primary healthcare services
- Provided referrals to other services for 904 participants.
- Engaged 10 Peer Support Specialists across Cumberland County.
- Distributed 1,555 naloxone kits to promote safety.
- Increased referrals sources by 22%.

Service Accessibility:

- With the support of opioid settlement funds, participants with opioid use disorder (OUD) can access services more easily.

Health and Wellness Initiatives:

- Collaborated with local health providers, Cumberland County Department of Public Health, Carolina Treatment Center, and Goshen Medical Services to ensure participants receive necessary medical care.

Through these achievements, we are not only meeting immediate needs but also laying the groundwork for long-term recovery and wellness in our community.

### **Success Narrative**

We have two success stories to share for this strategy.

Case#7298 story is a testament to the powerful transformative impact of support during difficult times. As one of the first individuals to benefit from the grant funds, her journey highlights the importance of community and resources in the overcoming life's toughest challenges. When 7298 found herself in a domestic situation, she made the decision to leave her home to protect herself, her sanity, and her children. For over six months, they lived in hotels. The grant played a critical role in supporting her during this transitional living by helping her to afford the hotel stays. While living in the hotel, 7298 continued support groups at Carolina Treatment Center (CTC). These groups gave her the community she needed to rebuild her life. Through the guidance of a peer support specialist (PSS), 7298 learned how to create a budget, which was instrumental in her search for permanent housing. With PSS's assistance, she was able to find an affordable home. The grant provided the utility deposit, allowing her to move in and take the first step toward long term stability. Thanks to her unwavering commitment and the continued support through CTC, 7298 found a new job. Recognizing the

challenges of transportation, the grant provided her with a bus pass, enabling her to get to both her job and treatment. 7298 continues to thrive in her recovery; today, she maintains her housing and sobriety. This is a powerful example showing that, with hope, persistence, and the right help, rebuilding a life is not only possible, it's achievable.

Ms. X came to our facility for substance abuse and her struggles with opioids and other substances. When she arrived, she was very scared and emotional. She did not have any family or any support system to help her. She had experienced homelessness and traumas that were brought on by her addiction. During her stay with us, she made tremendous progress in her recovery and in her confidence. She gained a sponsor and began working on her recovery through Alcoholics Anonymous. She also attended Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient classes through Carolina Outreach. She was finally able to gain back her relationship with her father who she is very close with today and has as a support system. Over time, she came out of her shell and began to participate more and more with the other women in the home. She became very compassionate towards others and was very open with her experiences and willingness to work towards a better life. With her sponsor, she worked the 12 steps of recovery. She attended meetings in AA/NA community and joined a home group where she became active in chairing meetings. She completed the program and gained full-time employment in retail. She is still sober today and an active member in the recovery community. She has since moved on to Oxford House to slowly transition out into the real world. Since working the 12 steps of recovery, she now sponsors other women to do the same thing for them. We are very proud of Ms. X and are always pleased to have her come and visit.

#### ❖ **Exhibit A, Strategy 4: Recovery Housing Support**

##### **Progress Narrative**

Key Achievements:

Participant Engagement:

- Served 49 individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD).
- Assisted 40 unique individuals with rent.

Support Services:

- Integrated comprehensive support services, including: Access to mental health and substance use counseling

Community Engagement:

- Established partnerships with local organizations to provide resources such as job training and educational opportunities.
- Organized community events to foster connections between residents and local support networks.

The recovery housing strategy has made significant strides in providing individuals with the stable housing they need to support their recovery. By continuing to focus on the comprehensive support and community integration, we aim to enhance our impact and promote long-term recovery success.

##### **Success Narrative**

We have two success stories to share for this strategy.

Joseph is in his 30's and became addicted to opioid medication after an injury sustained in an accident. When he could no longer get prescription medication, he turned to illicit street drugs and his addiction progressed to other substances. He became a client at one of the MAT treatment centers in Fayetteville

for over 7 years. Every day, he went to the clinic to get his dose. Joseph felt he needed something different to change his life for good. Joseph started attending 12-step meetings and got a sponsor while formulating a plan to get off the daily MAT treatments. He checked himself into Recovery International detox and then was admitted to Myrover-Reese Fellowship Homes. This is a free, 24/7 residential home for men and women who want to be free of substances. All housing, food, transportation, mental health, and medical needs are taken care of. Over 90% of the clients who come to Myrover-Reese are unhoused. Joseph began a new journey of practicing the principles of the 12 steps and helping others as well as attending outpatient classes and Carolina Outreach. His time at Myrover-Reese allowed him to focus on changing as a person and healing from his addictions from the inside. Joseph was able to establish a recovery community he is still a part of. Joseph gained employment, and after leaving Myrover-Reese, he moved back home where he is head of household, taking care of his family. Using the tools he developed at Myrover-Reese and in recovery, Joseph has been able to repair family strains and regain trust. Although he left Myrover-Reese a year ago, he still shows up to meetings and helps the other men there on a weekly basis. He is a great example of how the opioid settlement funding is being used at Myrover-Reese to permanently change lives one person at a time. (Names and identifying details have been altered to preserve anonymity)

Case #2168's journey is a testament to healing and progress with the assistance of supportive resources. 2168 lives with mental health issues and PTSD from a difficult past; with her profound support and determination, along with the help of grant funding, she was able to secure the deposit for a new home. The grant funding was not only able to put a roof over her head but also allowed her to leave behind an environment that contributed to her PTSD. This home became her safe place, allowing her to focus on healing and maintaining her independence. 2168 remains actively engaged in her treatment, demonstrating remarkable strength and dedication to her well-being. 2168's ability to maintain her home reflects her determination and the support she received through the clinic.

#### ❖ **Exhibit A, Strategy 5: Employment-related Services**

##### **Progress Narrative**

###### **Key Achievements:**

###### **Participant Engagement:**

- Served 175 individuals through employment services.
- Conducted 12 job readiness workshops.
- Provided 56 transportation requests associated with employment related services.

###### **Skill Development:**

- Implemented life skills training sessions covering resume writing, interview techniques, and workplace etiquette.

###### **Support Services:**

- Provided access to resources such as transportation assistance, financial literacy workshops, helping to remove barriers to employment.
- Connected participants with ongoing support networks, including mentoring programs and peer support groups.

The employment-related services program has made significant progress in helping individuals achieve meaningful employment as part of their recovery journey. By continuing to adapt our services

and strengthen community partnerships, we aim to further enhance our impact and support long-term success for participants.

### **Success Narrative**

Case #6817 has endured a lifetime of challenges, including domestic violence and substance use disorder, both of which deeply affected her sense of safety, self-worth, and overall well-being. Despite these experiences, 6817 has shown remarkable strength and determination in her journey toward recovery and independence. In 2024, 6817 began her recovery journey, seeking support to address her past and her struggle with illicit drug use. Her commitment led her to actively participate in programs at the Carolina Treatment Center where she made significant strides in managing the emotional impact of her past experiences. Motivated by a desire to heal for herself and help others facing similar challenges, 6817 set her sights on becoming a Peer Support Specialist. With the grant funding, 6817 were able to complete the peer support specialists training and obtain her certification. This accomplishment marked a pivotal moment in her recovery, providing her with a sense of purpose and a clear pathway toward financial independence. 6817 has embarked on a new career dedicated to helping others in her recovery journey. Drawing from her personal experiences, she now guides and empowers others as they navigate recovery challenges.

### **❖ Exhibit A, Strategy 7: Naloxone Distribution**

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Distribution Metrics:

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