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SHELBY COUNTY EARNS \$900K GRANT TO ADDRESS OPIOID ABUSE

Funding could help increase the number of diversions from incarceration to local treatment centers.

MEMPHIS, TENN. – Shelby County Government’s Community Service Division has earned a \$900K grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. The new funding supports the FY19 Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program and will be used to strengthen collaboration between local law enforcement and public health agencies. The goal of the program is to address prescription drug misuse, save lives, and reduce crime.

According to the CDC’s 2017 report, the number of U.S. opioid deaths increased over 28% between 2014 and 2016 (from 1,269 to 1,630). The CDC also reports that drug overdose (OD) deaths in Tennessee increased significantly from 2014 to 2015 (13.8%) and again from 2015 to 2016 (10.4%). Shelby County, the state’s largest county and home to Memphis, the state’s 2nd largest city, is at the forefront of the battle.

“With this new funding, we have a real opportunity to save lives,” offered Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris. “Drug overdose and prescription drug abuse are real epidemics that are plaguing our County. I commend the Health Department and our Community Services divisions for showing real leadership to help strengthen our relationships with other stakeholders and reduce the number of families affected by opioid abuse.”

The primary partner and sub-awardee is the Center for Addiction Science (CAS) at the UTHSC. The Shelby County Sheriff’s Office, Memphis Police Department, and other partners have committed to expand law enforcement and victim service partnerships to connect treatment and service opportunities for those who have established records with the various systems and histories of opioid abuse. Wraparound services that are supported by this grant include counseling, behavioral health, and case management for things like job placement, housing, transportation and adequate food.

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