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RIZE MASSACHUSETTS AWARDS MORE THAN \$2.5 MILLION IN GRANTS TO IMPROVE OPIOID USE DISORDER TREATMENT, MEASURE IMPACT OF OPIOID EPIDEMIC ON ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

BOSTON – Within its first year of operation, RIZE Massachusetts (RIZE), a nonprofit created to end the opioid epidemic in Massachusetts, announced today that it is awarding a total of more than \$2.5 million in grants that will fund community-based opioid use disorder treatment best practices, support research on the impact of the opioid epidemic on the Massachusetts workforce and economy, and produce an evidenced-based report on the effectiveness of recovery coaches in the addiction recovery process.

“These grants are intended to disrupt the status quo by improving and expanding care and treatment of opioid use disorder while contributing to the evidence base and reducing stigma,” said David Torchiana, MD President and CEO of Partners HealthCare and chair of the RIZE Board of Directors. “This is just the beginning of RIZE’s work to end the opioid epidemic in Massachusetts and reduce its devastating impact on individuals, families, communities, and our economy.”

OPIOID USE DISORDER TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

\$1.8 million in grants were awarded to four community-based programs as part of RIZE’s inaugural grant program *Saving Lives, Improving Health: Redesigning Opioid Use Disorder Care* following a \$300,000 design grant phase. The grant program was created with the goal of establishing or expanding innovative systems of low-threshold, on-demand treatment to prevent death, support long-term treatment, and improve the health and quality of life for people experiencing opioid-use disorder.

The four grantees were chosen from a pool of six design grantees that came from more than 30 applicants. The final grantees were selected for their collaborative approaches to treatment that facilitate coordination among medical, behavioral, and community organizations. These

programs will be developed into best practices that will serve people in their communities while also having the potential to be scaled to help more people in need across Massachusetts. The four organizations are:

- Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program
- Brockton Neighborhood Health Center
- Community Healthlink in Worcester
- Lynn Community Health Center

“Lynn has some of the highest rates of opioid related deaths Massachusetts, and this grant will allow us to save more lives by implementing our innovative care program that brings together social services, community leaders, and law enforcement to improve access to treatment and long-term recovery services, particularly for those suffering from homelessness” said Kiame Mahaniah, MD, CEO of the Lynn Community Health Center. “This RIZE grant will help us overcome the opioid crisis in Lynn and we look forward to sharing a successful model of treatment for our most vulnerable population with other communities in Massachusetts.”

With the grants being disbursed over the next two years, the grantees will implement their innovative and collaborative approaches around five key criteria:

- Focusing on populations at greatest risk
- Serving as the patients’ medical home while partnering with other community organizations to coordinate care and access to treatment
- Treating co-occurring medical and psychiatric disorders
- Delivering immediate access to medications for addiction treatment
- Involving those with lived experience in the planning, implementation, and feedback

As part of RIZE’s commitment to embed learning and evaluation into the programs it funds, additional grant funding was also issued to measure the outcomes and effectiveness of the four programs to build improvements and produce evidence that will allow these programs to become sustainable and scalable solutions for possible implementation across the state.

RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE BASE BUILDING GRANTS

Grants were also awarded for important research projects that will increase the understanding of the impact of the opioid epidemic on the Massachusetts economy while also contributing to the evidence base on the most effective opioid use disorder treatments.

Contributing to the evidence base to improve treatment and recovery solutions

To improve the effectiveness of opioid use disorder treatment, and contribute to the evidence base for effective treatments, RIZE awarded a grant to the University of Massachusetts Medical School’s Center for Health Law and Economics. UMass Medical School will study the role of recovery coaches aiding people in their recovery process. Recovery coaches have lived experience with opioid use disorder and recovery and provide guidance and support to people working to overcome their addiction to opioids. The report will provide information needed to

define the role of recovery coaches, their effectiveness in bringing patients fully into recovery, and the net cost of this intervention to the health care system.

The negative economic impact of opioid use disorder

According to a national study by Altarum, opioid use disorder has cost the United States \$1 trillion dollars since 2001 and will add another \$500 billion by 2020. The Center for Disease Control estimates that the opioid epidemic is costing Massachusetts alone \$10 billion a year in health care costs, lost productivity, and other factors.

The Massachusetts Taxpayer's Foundation received a grant to create a report that will quantify the negative economic impact of the opioid epidemic on the Massachusetts economy. The report will produce needed information on the cost of the epidemic to employers and employees, the health care system, and state and municipal budgets.

"Massachusetts is seeing unprecedented economic success today, however, the opioid epidemic continues to take a toll on people's lives, businesses, and our economy," said Eileen McAnney, president of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation. "Having this information will make the business community and other stakeholders better informed and more focused on ending the opioid epidemic, which will save lives, strengthen our workforce and the economy, and make Massachusetts more competitive."

The impact of opioid use disorder on the workforce

One million people in this country are not working due to opioid use disorder, according to a report by the American Action Forum while the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that 55 percent of people with an opioid addiction are employed. Both factors have a negative impact on the workforce and the workplace by causing lost productivity and increasing health care costs. To create more data and information on the impact of the opioid epidemic on the Massachusetts economy, the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum (MHPF) at Brandeis University received a grant to create a report and hold a forum on the effect of the opioid epidemic on the Massachusetts workforce and employers.

"Opioid use disorder has a significant negative effect on the workforce and employers in Massachusetts in terms of lost productivity and increasing health care coverage costs," said Michael Doonan, Ph.D., executive director of the MHPF. "By gaining a clearer understanding of how the opioid epidemic is affecting the workforce and workplace, we can begin to reduce the negative impact through more informed public policy measures, increased employer education, and more treatment solutions connected to the workplace. The MHPF is pleased to work with RIZE and draw on Brandeis University resources from the Brandeis/Harvard Center to Improve System Performance of Substance Use Disorder Treatment funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the Opioid Policy Research Collaborate (OPRC), both under the direction of Professor Constance Horgan."

The report and forum will bring forward data and insights on how the opioid epidemic's presence in the workforce is affecting employers in terms of health care coverage costs and lost

productivity and will examine solutions that will both help people receive the treatment they need while alleviating the burden on employers.

About RIZE Massachusetts

[RIZE Massachusetts](#) is an independent nonprofit committed to achieving zero deaths and zero stigma related to opioid use disorder by investing in the best solutions and brightest minds that will save lives, reduce harm, and end the opioid epidemic in Massachusetts.

About the *Saving Lives, Improving Health: Redesigning Opioid Use Disorder Care* grant programs:

[BOSTON HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAM](#)

Boston Health Care for the Homeless (BHCHP) will partner with the Pine Street Inn and St. Francis House to increase access to treatment and harm reduction services for homeless and formerly homeless individuals with opioid use disorder. BHCHP will expand access to its SPOT Program (Supportive Place for Observation and Treatment) to provide safe medical monitoring for people at imminent risk of overdose. (SPOT served 500 patients, with over 3,500 encounters in its first year, approximately 13% of whom engaged in treatment.) BHCHP, Pine Street Inn, and St. Francis House will work together to implement new approaches to reduce harm and increase access to medication for addiction treatment for high-risk individuals in shelters and home-based environments.

[BROCKTON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER](#)

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center (BNHC) will implement a collaboration with the city of Brockton's Champion Plan (a police-assisted recovery program that encourages those with substance use disorders to visit the police station, where they are paired with a recovery coach), the Plymouth County Sheriff's Office, the Gandara Center, and High Point Treatment Center. Working together and with other community partners, the group will better coordinate opioid treatment and recovery services, while establishing BNHC as a medical home for patients with opioid use disorder. BNHC plans to focus on high-risk populations including those newly released from correctional facilities and homeless individuals.

[COMMUNITY HEALTHLINK - Worcester](#)

Community Healthlink (CHL), which operates one of only three state-funded opioid urgent care centers in Massachusetts, provides a comprehensive array of services for substance use disorder and mental illness, and through this grant will expand its Behavioral Health and Addiction Urgent Care. Through the expansion, CHL will provide a new option for patients including immediate access to medication-assisted treatment. CHL will also implement ways that medically-complex patients will receive care at Urgent Care by collaborating with partners including the Worcester Police Department and the UMass Memorial Medical Center emergency department.

[LYNN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER](#)

Through this grant, the Lynn Community Health Center (LCHC) will improve care for homeless individuals who are among those at greatest risk for overdose. LCHC is partnering with the Lynn Police Department, Lynn Shelter Association, Bridgewell, Inc., Healthy Streets Outreach Program and other community partners to implement a care model to improve access to treatment and long-term recovery programs. The team will utilize redesigned outreach and engagement strategies to serve homeless individuals where they are and initiate immediate treatment. The program will also expand LCHC's Homeless Medical Outreach Program to provide integrated opioid use disorder treatment, including medication assisted treatment and behavioral health services.

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