



OMNI INSTITUTE REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2024

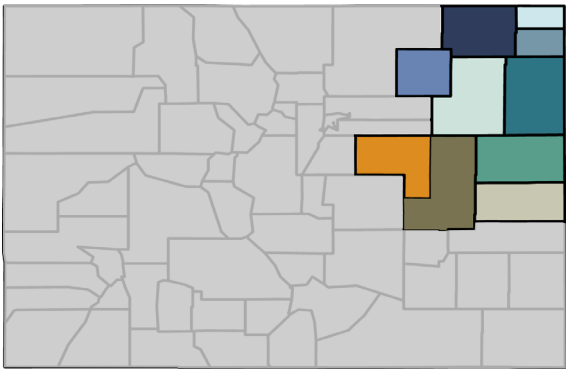
Case Study: Colorado Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT OPIOID ABATEMENT FUNDING
IN RURAL AND FRONTIER COMMUNITIES

For more information : reg4support@omni.org

Forming the Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council

Colorado’s Opioids Settlement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) mandated that each region create a regional opioid abatement council to ensure the proper administration of opioid abatement funds in compliance with state and federal guidelines. In 2020, Region 4 convened the Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council which consists of county government leadership and regional substance use experts. Colorado’s Region 4 consists of 10 counties in the Northeastern and Central areas of the state. Counties include:



Elbert County	Lincoln County	Kit Carson County	Cheyenne County	Yuma County
Washington County	Morgan County	Logan County	Sedgwick County	Phillips County

The Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC) required that all regions engage in a strategic planning process. The Region 4 Council contracted OMNI Institute, a non-profit social science consultancy to facilitate the strategic planning process that would identify the prioritization of funds over a two-year period. All selected strategies were required to align with the strategies listed in Exhibit E of the National Opioid Settlement Guidelines. Main categories include:

TREATMENT

RECOVERY

PREVENTION

HARM REDUCTION

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Success Towards a Stronger System of Care in Region 4

The hard work of Region 4 and its collaborative partners provides a successful model to increase the quality of services for community members. In just a few short years, Region 4 has made great strides towards developing a strong and resilient system of care and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Coordinated **ten** counties, **eight** organizations, substance use experts, and community members towards action.

Obtained **\$350,000** to further support the transportation needs of those struggling with OUD in Region 4.

Funded over **\$600,000** worth of transportation programming which has led to over **700** unique service interactions.

Continues to support **new and innovative services** that **greatly increase care coordination, provider education, and treatment** across the Eastern Plains.

Abatement Council Members

The Council Board VOTING MEMBERS

In accordance with the established by-laws, membership consists of eleven voting members made up of: Seven representatives from the Region 4 county commissioners, two representatives from the Region 4 municipalities, and two representatives from the Region 4 law enforcement.



Scott Weaver, County Commissioner
Yuma County



Terry Hoffmeister, County Commissioner
Phillips County



Mike Brownell, County Commissioner
Logan County



Stan Hitchcock, County Commissioner
Kit Carson County



Ben Ferree, County Commissioner & Pharmacist
Town of Limon



Chris Richardson, County Commissioner
Elbert County



Gordon Westhoff, County Commissioner
Morgan County



Kevin Blankenship, City Manager
Town of Sterling



Dave Martin, Sheriff
Morgan County



JD Ross, Commander Sterling Police Department
Logan County



Greg Tacha, City Manager
Town of Limon

The Advisory Board NON-VOTING MEMBERS

The Council Board has appointed representatives from the following local organizations as Advisory Group Members to lend their expertise in Behavioral Health.



Advocates for Recovery Colorado,
Substance Use Recovery Provider



Centennial Mental Health, Substance Use Treatment Provider



Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, Prevention Education



Colorado State University Office of Engagement and Extension, Prevention Education/Intervention



North Colorado Health Alliance, Substance Use Treatment/Recovery Provider



Elbert County Health Department



Kit Carson County Health Department



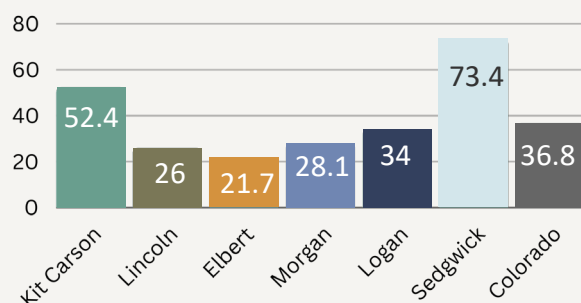
Northeast Colorado Health Department

Ongoing Data Needs Assessment & Planning

To better understand Region 4's needs, OMNI has engaged in a variety of ongoing opioid and substance use regional assessment activities. Drawing from secondary data, and primary data gathering of resource data of existing services, and surveying key partners in Region 4, several areas of need were identified. Below are example secondary data that highlight the problems facing Region 4 including an absence of substance use treatment services.

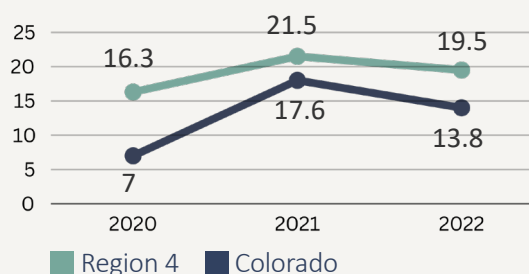
Secondary Data

AGE-ADJUSTED HOSPITALIZATIONS FOR OPIOID OVERDOSE per 100,000 Residents (2016-2023)*



*Data was not available for Washington, Yuma, Cheyenne, or Phillips Counties. (CDPHE, 2024)

AGE-ADJUSTED RATE OF OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS per 100,000 Residents (2020-2022)*



*Data was not available for Sedgwick, Yuma, Lincoln, or Cheyenne Counties. (CDPHE, 2024)

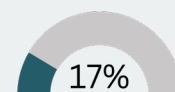
BUPRENORPHINE PROVIDERS

Only 10 of the 1093 SAMHSA registered buprenorphine providers (a medication used to treat opioid use disorder) in Colorado are located in Region 4. All 10 providers are listed as having a full caseload. (SAMHSA, 2024)

< 1%

YOUTH PRESCRIPTION MISUSE

Over 17% of high schools in HSR1 have misused prescription drugs, a trend that continues to increase. (Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 2019)



PERCEIVED ACCESSIBILITY

Over one in four high schoolers in HSR1 think that it is easy to get prescription drugs without a prescription. (Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 2019)



LIMITED OPIOID TREATMENT ACCESS

3 of the 11 providers who participated in the needs assessments indicated that their facility provided opioid use disorder treatment or recovery services. (Needs Assessment)



NO DETOXIFICATION SERVICES

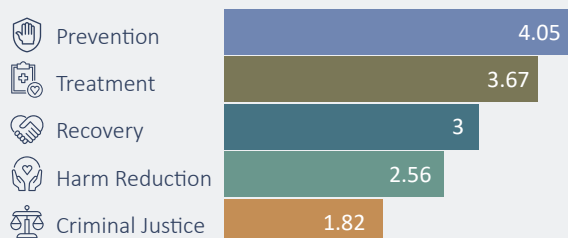
Service providers and law enforcement note that dedicated detox facilities are not present in Region 4. (Needs Assessment)



Ongoing Data Needs Assessment & Planning (Cont.)

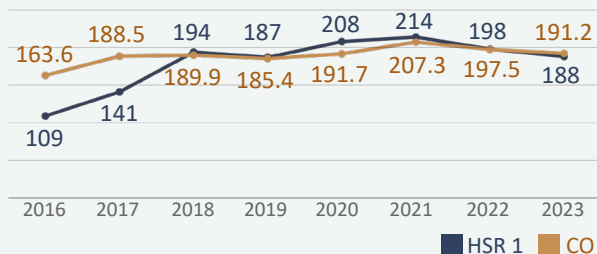
PRIORITY RANKINGS

Participants identified prevention, treatment, and recovery as the three greatest areas of need.



ER OVERDOSE VISITS

Emergency department visits for overdoses in HSR 1 have declined since their peak in 2021 but were still 1.7X higher than 2016.



WITHIN THE EASTERN PLAINS

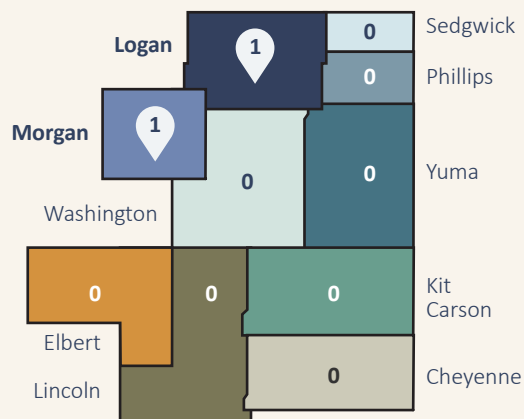
(Mar 2023 – Feb 2024)

- 70% of substance use-related care occurs in the emergency department
- Eastern Plains hospitals reported only giving out 17 naloxone kits to at-risk patients
- 500 hospital-based visits by SUD patients were uninsured

(Colorado ROOTS, 2024)

REGION 4 REGISTERED RECOVERY HOUSES

Out of 85 registered recovery houses in Colorado, **only two** are located within Region 4.



“People in our region are typically sent to Greeley, Fort Collins, or the Denver Metro Area for treatment, which means they are far away from their families. This increases their burdens, and it also doesn’t help facilitate the change needed in their long-term environment for a successful and sustainable recovery.”

- Survey Respondent

With the gaps in current services identified, the Region 4 Council moved forward with planning and development of requests for proposals (RFPs) to strengthen the opioid use system of care across the region. Through these efforts, Region 4 has successfully met all four of its objectives outlined in the strategic plan and continues to foster collaboration and innovation across services in the area. Region 4 and OMNI continue to monitor data and service trends across the region to highlight areas for improvement and to illuminate the impact that Region 4 service providers are having on the opioid landscape.

Region 4 Opioid Funding Implementation

To ensure the most impactful usage of the opioid abatement funds, the Region 4 Council, with facilitation support by OMNI, holds monthly meetings to discuss the ongoing implementation. This includes:

- Region 4 Opioid fund financials
- Grant opportunities available to regional providers to address opioid-related issues
- Review evaluation efforts of current funded activities
- Data review and planning to increase services and access across Region 4
- Outstanding business from Region 4 community

These meetings, which bring together the Council Board, the Advisory Council, community members, and subject matter experts have been fundamental in moving the strategic plan forward. Through these meetings, and the collaboration of the Region 4 Council members, Region 4 has successfully administered two RFP funding processes to increase services to Region 4 residents.



Impactful Funding



1. Transportation to Increase Access to Services

A lack of reliable transportation and the geographic distance between services were serious barriers to treatment and recovery in Region 4. To reduce these barriers, in late 2022, Region 4 solicited an RFP for services aimed at increasing access to SUD services by providing transportation across the region. The Council selected two organizations with strong community ties, North Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA) and Centennial Mental Health Center (CMHC), for funding to aid in the purchasing of transportation vehicles, staff, and software to support the effort.

Through transportation funding, NCHA and CMHC are providing increased access to:

- ✓ Sober living housing
- ✓ Outpatient services
- ✓ Substance use disorder monitoring
- ✓ Emergency services
- ✓ Acudetox
- ✓ DUI services
- ✓ Peer recovery services
- ✓ Care navigation



2. Expansion of Recovery Services

As a part of their Region 4 award, North Colorado Health Alliance increased recovery and harm reduction services in Region 4 through providing additional Recovery support Peer Coaches, opening up a Recovery Hub in Sterling, and providing overdose prevention education and resources across the region.

NCHA provides expanded recovery & harm reduction services across the region including:

- ✓ Community outreach and engagement
- ✓ Overdose prevention
- ✓ Treatment & Recovery community events
- ✓ Recovery Hub in Sterling

Region 4 Opioid Funding Implementation (Cont.)



3. Expansion & Increased Efficacy of Treatment

In 2024 Colorado ROOTS was awarded Region 4 Opioid funds to support treatment and/or recovery efforts. Colorado ROOTS proposed work will support expansion and increased efficacy for treatment services through existing hospitals and medical centers located across the region through building capacity for increased and improved addiction care across the Eastern Plains.

Through Region 4 funding, Colorado ROOTS will:

- ✓ Improve addiction training for healthcare professionals
- ✓ Advance addiction care coordination across Region 4
- ✓ Provide technical assistance for providers serving those with opioid use disorder
- ✓ Strengthen the continuum of care between existing providers across the region



4. Supporting Treatment in Justice Settings

In 2024, several jails in eastern counties lost funding for their jail-based medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) programs. As local law enforcement officials have found the programs to be highly successful, the Region 4 council approved temporary funding support for the programs while they seek additional funding. These programs will provide crucial treatment services to justice-involved individuals who may not otherwise have received access to treatment.

Through Region 4 stop-gap funding, local jails will:

- ✓ Continue the care of currently incarcerated individuals
- ✓ Ensure increased access to much needed medications for opioid use disorder
- ✓ Support evidence-based treatment protocols for those with opioid use disorder

Region 4 Opioid Abatement Council Awarded Infrastructure Funding by the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council

In August 2023, the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council announced the recipients of the second round of infrastructure funding. Through a competitive application process, Region 4 was awarded over \$350,000 to support the funding of transportation programs across the region. This funding, which was provided in addition to the funds originally allotted to Region 4, ensures greater access to services for residents of Region 4 and provides greater sustainability of the opioid funding for the years to come.



Evaluation Efforts

All organizations funded by the Region 4 Council are required to undergo continuous evaluation throughout the funding period. OMNI collects data from the funded organizations on a quarterly basis. To date, transportation funding recipients are in their fourth quarter of evaluation, while evaluation efforts are beginning for the treatment and recovery recipient as well as the jail-based MOUD programs.

As shown below, evaluation data indicates that the funded transportation providers are greatly increasing access to treatment and care for those with OUD. In six months alone, the transportation services funded by Region 4 have allowed for over 150 community members to access services. These services have been well received by community members in that same period, over 700 rides have been conducted, showing a high level of repeat service usage.

REGION 4 FUNDED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

first 6 months:

 **150**
community members given
access to services

 **700**
rides conducted

Transportation Funding Recipients




Centennial Mental Health Center



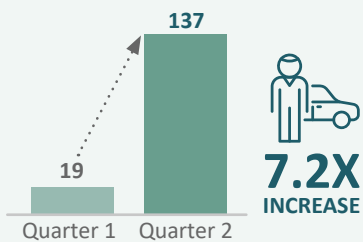
Funding Purposes: To expand secure transportation services to include demand response services to transport individuals seeking voluntary admission substance use disorder in-patient services, such as residential treatment and/or detoxification and withdrawal management.

Initial Two-year award: \$156,602.32

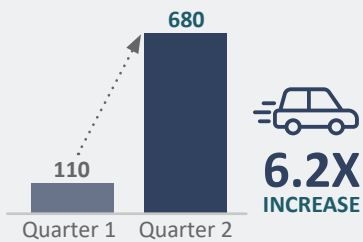
Funding was used for:

-  The purchase of one secure transport van
-  25% of salaries and fringe benefits for six new full-time employees
-  The full cost of a dispatch software system

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRANSPORTED



TOTAL NUMBER OF RIDES



Evaluation Efforts (Cont.)




North Colorado Health Alliance

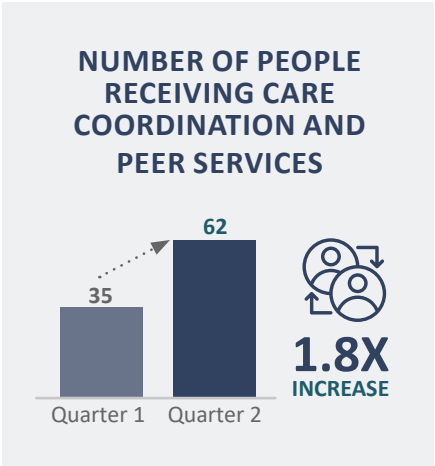


Funding Purposes: To provide transportation services to patients seeking treatment and recovery services for a substance use disorder. This funding will align the regional efforts of NCHA and Advocates for Recovery Colorado (AFRC) to bridge services across the continuum of care through improved access to transportation, care coordination, overdose prevention, peer recovery support services, and treatment support for counties within the Region 4 area.

Initial Two-year award: \$495,789

Funding was used for:

-  Two transport vehicles
-  One full-time peer coordinator
-  One full-time peer recovery coach



Future Evaluation Efforts

OMNI and Region 4 will continue to collaborate with the funded organizations during the evaluation process and showcase the effectiveness of their service offerings at increasing the opioid treatment and support network across the region.

Treatment and Recovery Funding Recipient

- ✓ Colorado ROOTS



Jail Based MOUD Funding Recipients

- ✓ Elbert County Jail
- ✓ Kit Carson Correctional Center
- ✓ Lincoln County Jail
- ✓ Logan County Detention Center
- ✓ Morgan County Jail
- ✓ Washington County Justice Center

