

# Substance Use in Aitkin

## Supports and Barriers to Recovery - SUMMER 2020

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### Human Needs: Education, Prevention, Stigma

**Education Needs:** Substances, mental health, stigma, social media, enabling practices, AL-ANON, opioid dangers, fentanyl and carfentanyl, alternative pain options, SBIRT, and employer education for how to help employees with addiction and transition out of treatment.

**Naloxone (Narcan) availability and opioid overdose response:** The police department is not interested in naloxone training at this time. Some think that it is enabling though many argue the need for improved naloxone access. Naloxone is a life-saving drug and combatant of opioid overdose. Anyone interested in training can contact Erin Melz (contact info at bottom of article).

**Recovery Needs:** Community forums, availability of resources to people struggling, health care provider education, protocols for acute pain management, increased accountability and support for those leaving jail, SUD treatment in jail, job training, and mental health services and awareness.

**Youth education/academic needs:** Substance and smoking prevention, social media/internet safety, social determinants of health, and stigma, updated DARE curriculum, get resources to students and parents, and eradicate stigma around mental health events. Educate school staff, bus drivers, and parents on signs and symptoms of substance use

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### Social Capital: Community, Peer Support, Friends, Family

**Recovery Needs:** The Aitkin recovery community is known for sticking by each other, but support, housing, and quality of treatment is dependent on wealth. Support groups, like AA and NA have a presence, but the community has raised concerns about exclusivity.

**Social disconnect:** Difficult to manage lack of connection for those new to recovery. Fostering social support is vital, but building a new support system is difficult. Positive adult role models for youth are important.

**Social barriers:** Old acquaintances, environments, and habits perpetuate substance use. It is difficult to insulate from pre-recovery community, places, and things which can make recovery difficult. There can be triggers in recovery groups, community stigma, and a lack of trust.

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### Cultural Capital: Trends, Barriers, and Supports

- Easy substance access for youth
- Substances as self-medication
- People connect with street dealers when opioid prescription access is not available
- Meth, heroin, prescription opioids, marijuana, and alcohol are the most common substances
- Suboxone is available in three clinics

- Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) not available in sobriety court
- Providers work well together
- Multi-generational community

#### **Native communities are suffering**

- Multiple overdoses per week
- Naloxone is widely available

- Lack of transitional housing, family and parent programming
- Historical trauma and generational use create cycles of use
- Sober Squad is a positive presence
- Reintegrating cultural traditions into treatment is important
- East Lake Community Center is a support
- Some over-prescribing in nearby areas

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## Physical Capital: Transportation, Housing, Treatment Centers

- Aitkin has rural, close-knit communities
- An Opioid Abuse Prevention grant was funded
- Prevention and socioeconomic issues need to be addressed
- St. Gabe's in Little Falls opioid grant
  - Review controlled drug reporting
  - Work on patient tapering
  - Opioid RN coordinator
- **Treatment Needs:**
  - Transportation
  - Online Rule 25 assessments
  - Treatment centers, Peer Recovery Services, detox, long term planning, staff
  - Vivitrol (naltrexone) access
  - Prescribing for opioid use disorders (MOUD)
  - Drugs for meth withdrawal
  - Hard to place meth use disorders
  - Treatment services for in jail
  - Shorter waits for treatment
- **Psychosocial Needs:**
  - Housing, food, transportation
  - Low income housing and social services
  - Septic systems and running water
  - Employment, transportation
  - Housing for those with criminal records

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## Community Capital and Areas for Growth

- Opioid Task Force decreased opioid prescriptions by 40-50%
- Substance-related crime is common Increased funding allocated for SUD
- Aitkin PD has one Drug Recognition Expert
- More drug than alcohol issues: heroin is growing, but fentanyl is rare
- Ross Resources runs a workforce center which helps to employ those with criminal records
- Substance use issues in workplace
- **SUD and co-occurring issues:**
  - Mental illness, suicidality, depression, boredom, mood disorders, chronic pain, etc. Address at a community and societal level
  - SUD growing, overdoses seen commonly
  - Meth is a big issue, opioids on the rise
- **Aitkin Community Task Force**
  - Goal: reduce opioid deaths & complications
  - Collaborate with community organizations

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## East Central and Hinckley-Finlayson School Districts

East Central and Hinckley-Finlayson School Districts work in partnership with Pine County Health & Human Services and the Pine County Chemical Health Coalition to operate a "Positive Community Norms Campaign" that focuses on the prevention of underage drinking and recently a new campaign has been

started for tobacco, vaping and e-cigarettes. These campaigns have been positively received, but no such campaign exists for other substances such as heroin, methamphetamines or other opiates.

## School Trends and Needs

### McGregor

- Physical and psychosocial needs
- Need funding for social workers
- Marijuana and vaping common
- Parental SUDs lead to behaviors in students

### Hill City

- Uses Itasca for resources due to proximity
- Student absences are a barrier
- Social/emotional needs must be addressed
- Marijuana, pills, and LSD seen
- Service many low income families
- Interested in a school naloxone protocol

### Aitkin

- Suicide, mental health issues
- Top substances: marijuana, meth, opioids
- Absences in school related to SUD
- Increase in opioids in Crosby & Aitkin

### Aitkin High School & Rippleside Elementary

- Vaping, tobacco, and meth prevalent
- Heroin is expected to have a presence
- Emphasize critical thinking in students
- Involve police chief in prevention programs
  - Something aside from DARE
- Naloxone is needed in Rippleside

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