



Foundation *for* Opioid Response Efforts

FORE Awards \$900,000 in New Grants to Improve Access to Lifesaving Medications for Opioid Use Disorder in Pharmacies Nationwide

NEW YORK (December 5, 2023) – Only about 18% of people with opioid use disorder report the use of lifesaving medications like buprenorphine in their recovery, despite efforts to increase the number of providers who can prescribe it. To improve access to medications for opioid use disorder, the [Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts \(FORE\)](#) today announced \$900,000 in new grants. The [University of Rhode Island](#) is receiving \$455,797 to train pharmacists in Connecticut and Ohio to prescribe and dispense medications for opioid use disorder. The [University of Southern California](#) is receiving \$437,920 to assess barriers to the availability of the medication buprenorphine at neighborhood pharmacies across the country.

These latest grants continue FORE's work to accelerate the ability of pharmacies to provide care to patients with opioid use disorder. In March of this year, FORE announced [grants](#) totaling \$1.3 million to support programs at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy, Howard University, and the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy to enhance the availability of medications for opioid use disorder through the nation's pharmacies. FORE funding for addressing pharmacy-level barriers to treatment for opioid use disorder now totals \$2.2 million. Since its founding in 2018, FORE has awarded grants totaling \$40,113,091 to address the opioid and overdose crisis.

"Medications for treatment of opioid use disorder save lives, but access to these medications is often limited creating gaps in care for patients at highest risk for overdose," said Karen A. Scott, MD, MPH, president of the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts. "Pharmacies have a critical role in ensuring that patients receive the medications they need in a timely manner. We are providing funding to support access to treatment at this key access point."

The University of Rhode Island will initiate two novel approaches to providing medications for opioid use disorder via community pharmacies, particularly in areas where physician prescribers are limited. First, a collaborative practice agreement developed in Rhode Island, in which a pharmacist is allowed to prescribe and treat a specific condition under the supervision and authority of a licensed physician, will be adapted and implemented in Connecticut. It will enable pharmacists in Connecticut to be trained to prescribe buprenorphine and provide maintenance care to people with opioid use disorder. Second, a protocol for informing patients, starting treatment, and providing ongoing care will be implemented in community pharmacies in Ohio, where Drug Enforcement Administration-licensed pharmacists can prescribe controlled substances. The University of Rhode Island will also conduct a state-by-state review of pharmacy regulations and develop toolkits for pharmacies in other states with the goal of expanding these new approaches to community pharmacies across the United States.

Barriers to access to buprenorphine at retail pharmacies, particularly those serving low-income areas and communities of color, contribute to gaps in treatment for people with opioid use disorder. The University of Southern California will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the extent and impact of the availability and dispensing of buprenorphine at 60,000 chain and

independent pharmacies across the country. The project will help identify patients and communities most at-risk for gaps in buprenorphine access when it is no longer available at their local pharmacy. The aim is to identify trends and disparities to medications for opioid use disorder access at the national, state, and local level to inform future policy discussions.

Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE)

FORE was founded in 2018 as a private 501(c)(3) national, grant-making foundation focused on addressing the nation's opioid crisis. FORE is committed to funding a diversity of projects contributing solutions to the crisis at national, state, and community levels. FORE's mission is to support partners advancing patient-centered, innovative, evidence-based solutions impacting people experiencing opioid use disorder, their families, and their communities. Through convening, grantmaking and developing informational resources, FORE seeks to bring about long-term change. To date, FORE has awarded 102 grants to 90 organizations, totaling \$40.1 million. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Source: Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE)

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