

Question 1: *Provide a description of the current opioid and other emerging drug threat initiatives in your community. Who are the partners in each of these initiatives, and when were they initiated?*

The Pinellas County Fusion Group began in 2016 as an opportunity to address the emerging issue with Spice throughout the Pinellas County community. Since inception, the focus has evolved to address the opioid epidemic plaguing our community, as well as reviewing trends from the forensics laboratory to identify any new potential drug threats. Key partners for this initiative include: law enforcement, public health, medical providers, EMS, the Poison Control Center, and the Medical Examiner/Forensics Lab. The Fusion Group meets at least quarterly, if not more frequently depending upon need, to discuss the trends identified by each of the participating partners and identify any opportunities for coordination of efforts.

The Pinellas County Opioid Task Force was established in 2017 and is co-chaired by the Department of Health in Pinellas and Operation PAR (the local publicly funded drug treatment facility). Data identified through the Fusion Group was presented at the initial Task Force meeting to assist participants in developing a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to develop a comprehensive picture of the opioid epidemic in Pinellas County. This analysis led to the development of the vision and strategic plan. Partners in this initiative include: the Department of Health, Operation PAR, the Florida Department of Children and Families, Pinellas County Schools, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, various local law enforcement agencies, local hospital systems, local health centers, and various other local non-profits. The Opioid Task Force meets every other month.

Question 2: *What specific challenges are motivating your community's interest in participating in this initiative? What makes now an opportune time to engage in this work as a system? If selected, what does our community hope to achieve?*

Pinellas County had seen a significant number of opioid overdose deaths during the "pill mill" epidemic which peaked in 2010. After this peak, the trend had been going down until 2016 when there was a sharp increase in the number of fatal overdoses. The increase continued through 2017 and community efforts were begun to reverse the trend. Pinellas County has the partners at the table working together to mitigate the negative impact opioids are having on our community. The COAP grant funds are being utilized to develop a more robust data infrastructure to better inform the community partners to provide the opportunity for them to strategically invest limited funds where they will be most impactful. If selected, Pinellas County hopes to provide the key stakeholders the opportunity to learn from a community that has successfully mitigated the negative impacts of opioids on their community and bring back opportunities to enhance the efforts and partnerships already established through utilizing best practices and lessons learned from Erie County and other COAP grantees throughout the eight months of intensive technical assistance.

Question 3: *Please describe current activities/efforts that integrate criminal justice, public health, and behavioral health resources to address opioid use disorder and other emerging drug threats. What is working well, and what are your challenges?*

Pinellas County has a Data Collaborative which was established in 1999. The Data Collaborative, housed in the Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida (USF), compiles data from the following systems: criminal justice, human services, emergency medical services, the Juvenile Welfare Board, substance abuse mental health information system through the Florida Department of Children and Families, Medicaid services and claims data, Florida's Involuntary Civil Commitment Evaluation data, and child welfare. Pinellas County is working with USF on the COAP project to enhance the Data Collaborative to make the data timelier and to identify opportunities and systems gaps to enhance the data analyses opportunities of this robust data set. This established partnership is working well and enhancements made through COAP funding is on track to increase the usefulness of the data and analyses to inform Pinellas County and its partners of areas to focus limited funds based upon the highest need and potential impact. The biggest challenge faced has been regulations regarding data sharing and limitations on information access.

Question 4: *Please describe your community's multidisciplinary substance use disorder task force and/or criminal justice coordinating/planning group. Please describe the task force leadership and membership, committee structures, how often the group meets, current priorities, and the types of actions the group undertakes. How does your group interface with community stakeholders? (You may submit a roster of the members as an attachment to this application to COAP@iir.com)*

The Pinellas County Opioid Task Force is co-chaired by Dr. Choe with the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas and Dianne Clarke with Operation PAR. The Opioid Task Force has community members from over 30 organizations including public health, law enforcement, treatment providers, local government, and faith-based groups. Subcommittees were formed based upon participants' areas of expertise and these committees identified five strategic goals: 1) Increase Education and Awareness, 2) Reduce Opioid Deaths, 3) Connect to Effective Treatment, 4) Decrease the Supply of Opioids, and 5) Integrate and Collaborate Data Sources. The group meets every two months to discuss the current progress towards each goal, successes and challenges, and to identify new resources and opportunities to address the opioid epidemic throughout Pinellas County. The Pinellas County Opioid Task Force is built to include the community stakeholders and organizations most able to implement strategies to mitigate the impact of opioids locally.

Question 5: *One of the goals of this initiative is to support peer learning between the teams that are selected to participate. What could your team contribute to this peer learning opportunity?*

Pinellas County's groups could provide insights into the initial development and continued efforts surrounding the Data Collaborative. Lessons learned from the process can be shared to assist other locales in their efforts to seek partner commitments to sharing data in a secure and mutually agreeable manner. Established in 1999 and continued through today, data agreements and insights gleaned throughout the years can be discussed to assist our peers in developing their own strategies.

The functionality of the local Fusion Group is another opportunity in which Pinellas County could assist our peers in developing opioid related strategies. The Fusion Group has been the ad hoc data sharing system while Pinellas sought opportunities to enhance the data infrastructure to be timelier. Through a

shared purpose, Fusion Group participants come prepared to share their most recent data and to discuss pertinent trends to identify additional opportunities to mitigate the impact of opioids and other emerging drug threats. Pinellas County can assist our peers in the development and implementation of a Fusion Group to bring the key stakeholders together to discuss meaningful information in a timely manner to provide opportunities to mitigate issues at initiation instead of waiting months for public data to be made available. These meetings put key individuals in touch with others who can act on the data they are seeing.