



Pueblo County Sheriff's Office

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News Release

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Grant Allows Sheriff's Office to Expand Jail Substance Abuse Program

Pueblo, CO: The Pueblo County Sheriff's Office is expanding and enhancing its substance abuse prevention program in the Pueblo County Jail, thanks to a \$165,000 state grant aimed at combating opiate use.

The Sheriff's Office was awarded a two-year State Opiate Response grant provided through the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The grant will allow for the Sheriff's Office to expand and enhance its robust medication-assisted treatment program provided through the Jail Based Behavioral Services program.

"As we continue to see an increase in the number of people who are coming into jail with substance abuse issues, particularly opiate use, we know there is a need to increase access to medication-assisted treatment," said Pueblo County Sheriff Kirk M. Taylor. "This grant allows us to increase access to substance abuse prevention programs and connect individuals to services while they are incarcerated. Our hope is that when they are released from jail, they will continue with their sobriety which we hope will keep them from re-offending and returning to jail."

The grant allows for the jail to expand its growing medication-assisted treatment program by hiring a full-time coordinator and adding Suboxone, Methadone and Buprenorphine as drugs that can be prescribed to assist opiate dependent individuals who voluntarily agree to participate in the program. Vivitrol, which has been available in partnership with Gateway to Success to select individuals through the Jail Based Behavioral Services program since 2017, will continue. All four prescription drugs are FDA approved opiate treatment drugs.

The addition of a full-time coordinator will allow for a larger population to take advantage of the medication-assisted program and will provide for increased collaboration with community agencies while streamlining the process of referrals for treatment. The partnership with community agencies will further enhance the ability for individuals who are not enrolled in the medication-assisted treatment but are seeking to remain sober to successfully transition into the community upon their release from jail.

"Initially we targeted the sentenced population but with this grant, we are looking to expand to our pre-sentenced individuals as well," said Marco Macaluso, JBBS MAT supervisor.

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Tory Bertolino, the MAT coordinator, said her aim is to help incarcerated individuals to establish connections and commit to treatment long term. “Our goal is for them to continue treatment for as long as is needed or is wanted, while successfully transitioning into the community,” Bertolino said.

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