

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2019

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**Jeff Davis County Board of Health Receives Rural Health
Network Development Planning Grant**

Fund Total of One Million Dollars to be Dispersed Over Three Years

WAYCROSS, GA – The Jeff Davis Board of Health has been awarded a one million dollar grant to be dispersed over the next three years. The goal of this grant is to kickstart a strategic plan for prevention, recovery and treatment of those affected by substance use/opioid use disorder (SUD/OD). The Jeff Davis Substance Abuse Coalition (JDSAC) was formed in August 2018 in order to develop an integrated healthcare network for community collaboration in tackling substance use/opioid use disorder. JDSAC will initiate multiple strategies over a three-year span to improve family members' and community members' understanding of SUD/OD.

Jeff Davis Substance Abuse Coalition Members



Jeff Davis' emergency room visit rate for disorders relating to drug use from 2013 to 2017 was a staggering 237.1 per 100,000 individuals compared to 163.2 for Georgia. In 2018, there were 1,396 drug overdose deaths in Georgia alone. Jeff Davis County does not currently have any health providers that have a waiver to provide Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) for reducing opioid use. With such alarming data, the JDSAC intends to establish a peer-to-peer support system for local providers interested in obtaining a MAT waiver and make peer support specialists available to clients. Training will be offered to providers, administrative staff and other relevant stakeholders to offer the best quality care through MAT.

This collaborative effort is a great undertaking that will provide numerous benefits to the community and aims to encourage reduction of SUD/OD. Under the guidance and direction of Cara Taylor, Jeff Davis County Health Department Nurse Manager/ Project Director, the JDSAC will be able to implement activities and provide leadership and training opportunities to the community. Newly appointed Project Coordinator Sheryl Lewis was introduced at the community meeting held on October 10, 2019, at the Jeff Davis Public Library. Lewis will be the lead point of contact for the Rural Health Network Development Planning Grant and the liaison with other JDSAC members for coordinating implementation activities. JDSAC relies on the partnerships with healthcare providers, behavioral health professionals, public health representatives, law enforcement officers, chamber of commerce representatives, non-profit representatives, human services representatives and educators, all of whom are essential for the success of the reduction of SUD/OD.

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Coffee, Evans, Jeff Davis, Pierce, Tattnall, Toombs, Ware & Wayne counties*

Throughout the next few months, the coalition will be working towards holding school-based prevention events and meetings, designing educational awareness programs for SUD/ODU, developing a webinar for MAT that will be made available at no charge to providers, and beginning family support groups and outreach events to churches and others regarding the needs for recovery services. If you believe that you or your organization can make a positive impact within the JDSAC and would like to contribute as a JDSAC partner, please feel free to send a message to the organization's Facebook page or e-mail cara.taylor@dph.ga.gov. New information and coalition updates will be disseminated regularly through the JDSAC's Facebook Page: [facebook.com/JeffDavisSAC](https://www.facebook.com/JeffDavisSAC) and the JDSAC Website, <https://jeffdavissubstanceabusecoalition.org/>.

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