

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Department Changes Prevention Funding Distribution

The Wyoming Department of Health is changing the way substance abuse and suicide prevention funding is managed and distributed across the state in an effort to save money and encourage effective prevention strategies.

Department representatives notified community prevention organizations in March of plans to move to a single fiscal agent model on July 1. The change involves one prevention management organization charged with hiring local staff and distributing funding across the state. The Community Resource Center of Johnson County will fill this role.

Tom Forslund, Wyoming Department of Health director, said the department is fully committed to this approach, as well as to working with community coalition partners.

Forslund said discussions began on integrating prevention efforts some years ago. “However, the actual implementation has seemed to surprise a number of our valued community coalition partners,” he said. “It has become clear we should have done a better job with our communication efforts about this process. For that, we apologize.”

“WDH staff will actively seek local stakeholder input about essential issues as we move forward. It is important for the lines of communication to remain open,” Forslund said.

According to Dr. Wendy Braund, state health officer and Public Health Division senior administrator, the single fiscal agent concept will help make the most of prevention dollars in the face of decreased funding. “We expect to see increased efficiency and accountability, as well as a sharper focus on evidence-based prevention strategies,” she said.

Braund noted the current practice involves 52 separate contracts, each bearing administrative costs of about 8 to 11 percent. “By combining these numerous contracts for separate ‘fiscal agents’ into one contract with one entity, we will be able to save significant money on our administrative costs,” she explained. “With increasingly tight budgets expected, we believe it is in Wyoming’s best interest to spend as much available funding on actual prevention activities in our communities as possible rather than on administrative costs.”

Braund said funding distribution has not been based on actual population numbers or local severity of problems. “Our future funding model will consider population and which areas have the highest incidences or rates of substance misuse and which areas contribute most to the costs and harmful consequences of substance misuse,” she said. “Of course we also recognize that every county has a certain level of need for prevention activities.” Each county will have at least one prevention staff member and will receive a base amount of funding.

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