



Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

SKAGGS SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

# The backbone organization that ties together Colorado’s response to the opioid crisis

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention serves as the backbone organization that connects our state’s efforts to collaboratively address the crisis of misuse of prescription medications and illegally made opioids like fentanyl.

Since 2013, the Consortium has improved Colorado’s opioid crisis response by bringing together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. A massive challenge like this requires a well-coordinated response, and we approach it with a sense of urgency.



**MISSION**  
Reduce prescription drug misuse and abuse in Colorado by developing policies, programs, and partnerships.

**VISION**  
Eradicate prescription drug misuse and abuse in Colorado.

**VALUES**

- Transparency, Inclusivity, and Openness
- Driven by Data and Evidence
- Seek Consensus Based on Collective Impact Organizational Model

## PARTNERS

Our partners include federal agencies, national organizations, state departments—and also individuals who want to make a difference. We connect people from across the state and from the grassroots to Washington, D.C.

## PROGRAMS

The Consortium helps develop and implement programs that support communities, nonprofits, and the people of Colorado. One highlight is the Consortium’s Grant Writing Assistance Program that helped nonprofits and local governments in rural and frontier communities find and obtain grant funding.

Between 2019 and 2023, the program helped

**55 organizations** win \$31 million in grants

A 49:1 RETURN ON INVESTMENT

## POLICIES

The Consortium provides lawmakers with up-to-date, unbiased expertise and helps them understand federal and state laws that affect their work. Since 2017, the Consortium has helped inform legislators about evidence-based policies and practices concerning opioids and other substance use disorders related to prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and alternative criminal justice responses. The Consortium has helped the Legislature’s [Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Study Committee](#) by providing input on 14 bills that created more than 100 policies.



# The Consortium was formed in 2013,

as leaders and stakeholders developed a vision and a structure for a collaborative response to the opioid crisis. The Consortium is the result of Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper and Republican Attorney General John Suthers creating our strategic plan and funding our first work, which included the [Take Meds Seriously awareness campaign](#).

Since then, we have fostered and established connections with hundreds of communities and organizations across the state, and we can reach more than 1,300 people through our networks. The Consortium’s model and work has been studied by other states and organizations looking for an effective way to coordinate their work as they face the opioid crisis.

In 2017, the Consortium joined forces with the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to create the CU Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention. The Consortium is the Center’s community engagement arm, and our connection supports our staff and extends our reach. We are lucky to call the CU Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora home, but our staff is located throughout the state.

## FUNDING

The Consortium draws funds from diverse sources. These include allocations from the Legislature, appropriations from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Behavioral Health Administration, and grants from nonprofits such as the Pew Charitable Trusts and Colorado Health Foundation and companies like CoBank.

## Historic Highlights

2016

**Naloxone for Life**—the Consortium works with the Attorney General to provide naloxone to every police department and sheriff’s office in the state

2018

**Medication-assisted treatment expansion pilot program**—with the College of Nursing and CU’s School of Medicine Practice Innovation Program, the Consortium helps create the first program dedicated to creating and funding MAT clinics in rural and frontier areas

2019

**Opioid Response Blueprint**—the Consortium leads the effort to create a plan for how communities can effectively use funds from the opioid legal settlements

2021

**Behavioral Health Recovery Act**—the Consortium works with the Legislature and stakeholders to develop legislation that strengthens Colorado’s mental health and substance use disorder programs

2022

**Recovery Friendly Workplaces**—in partnership with CU Centers for Health, Work and Environment, a dynamic toolkit was published to aid employers with evidence-based resources to help employees during their recovery journey

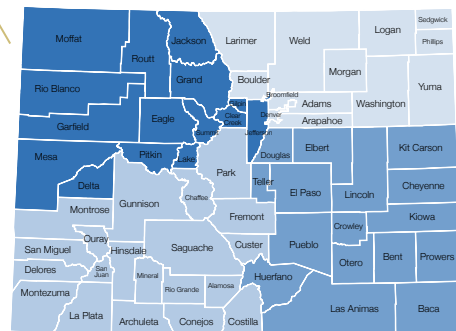
2023

**Keep the Party Safe**—the Consortium’s fentanyl overdose prevention campaign leads to the distribution of more than 7,500 doses of naloxone

## COLLABORATION

The Consortium collaborates with dozens of local and regional coalitions to support their community-based work. Partners include regional federal agencies, national organizations, state departments, grassroots organizations, healthcare providers, affected family members and people with lived experience.

This inclusive network has worked together to improve education, public awareness, safe disposal, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery resources across the state. Opportunities exist for anyone to partner with the Consortium.



The external relations staff has four members assigned to each quadrant of the state in order to improve assistance based on regional and local needs.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The members of our external relations team share resources and best practices with our local partners and elevate the voice of local communities to state policymakers and funders. They work across the state to support community members and organizations in urban, rural, or frontier communities. Our staff truly engages communities in all parts of the state.



Examples of their work includes:

- Providing technical assistance for the Regional Opioid Abatement Councils (ROACs) as they develop programs funded by money from opioid settlements.
- Creating an opioid overdose education and response training presentation and facilitator guide.
- Building relationships to enhance opioid overdose prevention programs through harm reduction, the naloxone bulk purchase fund, naloxone kiosks, funding opportunities, new agencies, and work groups.



## WORK GROUPS

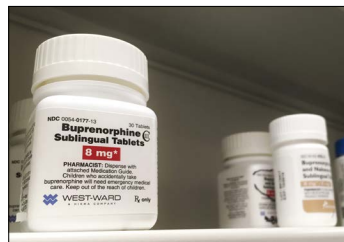
Bringing diverse partners together to plan and execute important projects is a key feature of the Consortium. We support 10 active work groups which are led by co-chairs with subject matter expertise. Work groups welcome participation from partner agencies and institutions, community organizations, and private citizens. Work groups also coordinate with external groups like the Attorney General's Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force.

Along with the members of the Consortium's coordinating committee, work group members set our priorities and determine the course of some of our most important programs and projects. Our team of program managers work with the work groups to help each succeed.

# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

## Supporting affected families and friends

In 2024, we developed a dedicated website with a curated list of resources to help families and individuals impacted by overdose and addiction. We also created the Compassion Cards project to help grieving loved ones.

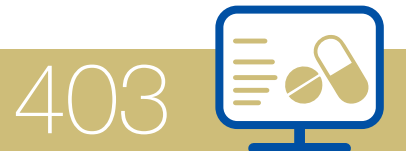


## Helping jails expand medication-assisted treatment

We worked with County Sheriffs of Colorado, the Colorado Jail Association, and the Center for Addiction Medicine at Denver Health to explore ways to improve the continuity of care for individuals with opioid use disorder after they are released from custody. This included hosting regional meetings that connected local service providers with local jail personnel.

## Record growth for provider education

The Provider Education Work Group and the Colorado Society for Addiction Medicine hosted a lunch-and-learn series with record attendance. The Consortium also doubled the reach of its online provider education program.



individual providers took  
1,129 cumulative courses



## Expanding the fight against fentanyl

The Consortium continued educating the public about the dangers of fentanyl with [the Keep the Party Safe campaign](#). In addition to distributing naloxone and fentanyl test strips, we distributed campaign posters to 168 libraries across Colorado.

## Extending peer support programs to promote recovery

The Recovery Work group provided ongoing support for peer support workforce growth in carceral, medical, public health, and community settings and worked with the Underdog Alliance on Advancing Peer Support Workforce in Carceral Facilities.

