

## CASE STUDY:

# Meeting Clients' Substance Use and Family Planning Needs Simultaneously

**The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) works to advance access to family planning services by meeting the substance use needs of clients in its network.**

Since the Title X Program's inception in 1970, ODH has been its sole grantee in the state. ODH has 43 subrecipients in 58 counties across Ohio with 79 clinic sites. While the majority of sites are located in local health departments, ODH also provides Title X funding to federally qualified health centers/community health centers and private, nonprofit health centers. All of the Title X service sites provide comprehensive Title X and other preventive services.

In 2019, Michelle Clark, ODH Title X Program Administrator, and Molly Kelly, Public Health Nurse Specialist, were involved in a Maternal and Child Health Title V services block grant assessment to better understand health services needs and accompanying disparities across the state, including those among potential Title X clients. Ms. Clark and Ms. Kelly participated in a work group focused on women's and maternal health and the priority was on increasing the prevalence of women receiving preconception care. The assessment included reviewing literature for evidence-based practices, reviewing relevant data, and discussing challenges and barriers regarding the state's data and current practices. One finding: Females made up 33.2% of the 3,764 Ohioans who died from unintentional drug overdose and 62.6% were of childbearing age, underlining to ODH the importance of addressing both the reproductive health and substance use needs of clients at their Title X service sites.

After compiling these needs assessment data, ODH used state dollars to provide enhanced services. Title X subrecipients had the opportunity to apply for funding to support: 1) coordination and collaboration of evidence-based strategies to address mental health and/or substance use needs for clients, or 2) the infrastructure to provide Title X services outside of the clinical setting to women who may have a substance use disorder, may be incarcerated, and/or students.

With these enhanced services, the number of SUD referrals in ODH's Title X service sites increased from 0 in 2015 to 1,140 in 2019. Ms. Clark noted that the services, "opened the door to go beyond just screening and referral for substance use disorders." Specifically, several subrecipients began partnering with drug treatment centers, homeless shelters, and correctional facilities to provide education and counseling services, and then to offer warm referrals back to Title X clinics. Two of ODH's subrecipients have partnered with medication-assisted treatment clinics within their agencies and together are assisting clients with accessing reproductive and behavioral health services. Ms. Clark noted the success of these two agencies and that "they have almost doubled their number of client visits and became models" for the rest of their network across Ohio.

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-Michelle Clark, ODH Title X Program Administrator*

In 2020, ODH received additional Title X funding for this work. As a result, ODH was able to award 11 subrecipients an additional \$45,000 each to continue ensuring access to family planning services. Work stemming from this additional federal funding has just begun. "We are working with them [subrecipients] to develop action plans to provide outreach and training, to network, and to develop these collaborations," said Ms. Clark.

For other Title X agencies interested in providing substance use services to clients, Ms. Clark and Ms. Kelly recommend finding the champion in your network passionate about providing family planning services and substance use services and consider inviting a SUD treatment center to join an Information and Education (I&E) committee or at least attend some meetings.



To learn more about integrating substance use services into your family planning agency, explore the FPNTC's [Implementing Substance Use Screening Toolkit](#).

