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# Craven County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
News Release: October 12, 2023

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## Craven County Enhances Opioid Epidemic Response

CRAVEN COUNTY, N.C. – Craven County combined its Opioid Task Force developed in 2017 with national Opioid Settlement Funds to create the Craven County Opioid Epidemic Response. Craven County's Opioid Epidemic Response department is located at 2822 Neuse Boulevard in New Bern and the phone number is (252) 636-7262.

The Opioid Epidemic Response was established to reduce opioid-related overdoses and deaths in Craven County through prevention, collaboration, harm reduction, treatment, short-term and long-term recovery, and recovery support services.

Colonel Eric T. Lund, MD, MPH, FACPM-Emeritus, CPH, joined Craven County's Opioid Epidemic Response as Opioid Program Manager on October 2, 2023. Lund is responsible for ensuring Craven County complies with requirements established by the Memorandum of Agreement between the State of North Carolina and Local Governments on Proceeds Relating to the Settlement of Opioid Litigation (NCMOA).

Lund graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry before earning a Doctor of Medicine degree from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Colonel Lund continued his education by completing a Master of Public Health degree at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and he most recently earned an Associate of Arts degree as a Community Spanish Interpreter.

He retired as a Colonel after serving honorably as a physician for more than 27 years in the U.S. Army, including tours of duty in Bosnia-Herzegovina and two 12-month tours in Iraq. He led at every level of the Army, including health clinic, public health department, hospital, and health care system. After his military career, Lund served two years as the Director of the Integrated Disability Evaluation System at Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty), NC, providing disability evaluations for wounded, ill and injured Soldiers. He is a Fellow-Emeritus of the American College of Preventive Medicine.

Lund joins Jasmine Canady, Craven County Opioid Outreach Coordinator, and Amber M. Parker, Craven County Human Resources Director, to form the Opioid Epidemic Response department.

Craven County has been awarded roughly \$15.5M from the national opioid settlement, to be received over 18 years. The NCMOA establishes guidelines for the use of those funds as well as reporting requirements.

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“Craven County’s opioid settlement award sounds like a lot of money, and it is a lot of money, but considering the number of citizens affected by this epidemic, the cost of treatment and services, the length of time recovery can take to achieve, the number of different services individuals with substance use disorder may need assistance with, and the number of years it can take to realize the type of change we need to see from prevention strategies, that settlement money will not solve the problem alone,” stated Amber M. Parker, Craven County Human Resources Director.

Craven County is currently poised to select from the Option A evidence-based strategies listed in Exhibit A of the NCMOA. The Craven County Board of Commissioners adopted its first resolution for local spending authorization of opioid settlement funds on August 7, 2023. That resolution authorized funding:

- \$152,548 for Collaborative Strategic Planning and this includes funding the Opioid Program Manager position and program as well as funds to contract with Recovery Alliance Initiative (RAI) to complete the 14-Step Collaborative Strategic Planning process outlined in Exhibit C of the NCMOA to allow Craven County to have the flexibility to consider Option B strategies listed in Exhibit B of the NCMOA,
- \$25,000 for Naloxone Distribution,
- \$200,000 for a countywide Post Overdose Response Team to be provided by the CarolinaEast Foundation, and
- \$244,500 for Recovery Housing Support to be provided by Reviving Lives Ministry, Hope Mission, and The Healing Place of New Hanover County.

In addition to the national opioid settlement funds, the Craven County Board of County Commissioners continues to fund initiatives to meet needs identified by the 2017 Opioid Task Force. Those initiatives include increasing enforcement through funding the Craven County Sheriff’s Office for additional narcotics investigators, School Resource Officers to provide Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), a K-9 program, and a Jail Navigator in the Craven County Detention Center to coordinate services designed to reduce recidivism. The Craven County Board of County Commissioners has also continued to be a member of a three-county partnership along with Onslow County and Carteret County to fund the Dix Crisis Intervention Center for the provision of short-term mental health stabilization, non-hospital medical substance use detoxification, and crisis stabilization.

Craven County also continues to fund community collaboration and prevention outreach. “Jasmine Canady was Craven County’s first full-time staff member dedicated to the opioid crisis. Since she joined this effort in November of 2019, she has worked tirelessly to end the demand for illicit opioids through prevention activities,” Parker said. “We must stop the demand. If we do not stop the demand for illicit opioids and other street drugs, many of which are laced with the highly deadly drug, Fentanyl, we will find ourselves in this same place in 18 years when national opioid settlement funding ends.”

Craven County residents seeking assistance with opioid use disorder or those in need of general prevention information can visit <https://www.cravencountync.gov/opioid> or call (252) 636-7262. For more information the NCMOA visit <https://www.morepowerfulnc.org/opioid-settlements/>.

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