

# MICHIGAN OPIOID ADVISORY COMMISSION

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Goals to support community inclusion, public transparency, and the just use of state opioid settlement funds.

## OPIOID ADVISORY COMMISSION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

The current overdose epidemic—driven largely by the synthetic opioid, fentanyl—continues unabated nationally and in Michigan. In 2022, nearly **3000 individuals** died in this state, despite years of national, state, and local interventions aimed at curbing overdose deaths. Michigan's opioid settlement funds—over **\$1.5 billion** over the 18 years—are an opportunity to fill health disparity gaps, especially those experienced by BIPOC, Tribal, rural and justice-impacted communities. The overdose epidemic is an issue of complexity that involves acknowledgement of the addiction and mental health crisis, the **social drivers of health (SDOH)**, **structural and systemic racism**, and ongoing disparities in access to necessary, life-saving resources. Acting under its legislative charge, the **Opioid Advisory Commission (OAC)** has compiled a set of recommendations to help guide decision-making around the planning and use of state opioid settlement funds.

These recommendations are informed and supported by national and state level-data as well as by experiential and cultural knowledge acquired through OAC listening sessions, public survey, and ongoing engagement activities with state, regional, local, Tribal, and other community partners throughout Michigan.

### Listen to communities

Commit to community inclusion as a necessity for all settlement work. Provide regular opportunities for community voices to be heard...and utilized, in state decision-making.

### Invest in communities

Ensure that the majority of state settlement dollars are directed back to Michigan's communities.

### Prioritize communities most impacted

Direct dollars to Tribal Nations and communities most profoundly impacted by the addiction and mental health crisis.

### Develop a plan

Leverage state settlement funds around the development of a multi-year, comprehensive state strategic plan.

### Optimize existing efforts

Ensure meaningful collaboration to eliminate silos and synergize state response efforts.

### Invest for impact and sustainability

Invest with intention and foresight. Develop and define measurable goals for all state funding initiatives and position investments for growth and sustainability.

### Build trust through transparency (and engagement)

Commit to reporting 100% of settlement expenditures to the public. Share planning and decision-making processes openly and through easily accessible means. Increase meaningful communication and engagement with communities—especially those most profoundly impacted.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



## Transparency

### Need(s)

- An explicit commitment by state leaders to providing 100% public reporting on settlement spending, prior funding sources, planning processes, and anticipated investments.
- Development of a comprehensive (public) strategic plan to frame current and future settlement efforts.



## Inclusion

### Need(s)

- Demonstrable commitment to community engagement and inclusion as a foundational component of all state opioid settlement work.



## Collaboration

### Need(s)

- Demonstrable commitment by state leaders to supporting meaningful intergovernmental, interdepartmental collaboration and alignment of state opioid settlement work.



## Accountability

### Need(s)

- Statutory assurance for public transparency of all reports required by Section 917 of Public Act 119 of 2023.

## STATE OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDING PRIORITIES

1

**Support the Governor's recommendation for an appropriation from the Michigan Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services (FY 2025).** Ensure that the use of settlement dollars is guided by community input, cultural and experiential knowledge from individuals and families directly impacted, and national guidance. Ensure that a portion of funds are used for ongoing outreach and engagement activities with disproportionately impacted communities. Prioritize use of dollars in communities, most profoundly impacted and establish fair and transparent processes for determining where and how to spend funds. Support meaningful collaboration between the Department of Health and Human Services, OAC, and Opioids Task Force through joint reporting to Executive and Legislative Leadership on the status of intergovernmental activities and collaborative efforts in the state opioid settlement space.

2

**Support an increase of settlement appropriations by \$6 million for a FY 2025 "Community Investments" set-aside.** Ensure that these dollars are used to create low-barrier community funding opportunities, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services; "Community Investments" should support supplemental funding for prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction efforts. "Community Investments" should be offered on a quarterly basis and be easily accessible, with low administrative burden, limited reporting requirements, and priority given to applicants from and/or serving disproportionately impacted communities.

3

**Prioritize Tribal communities by ensuring an appropriation from the Michigan Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund to Tribal Nations for FY 2025.** Consult with the United Tribes of Michigan (UTM) and all twelve (12) individual Sovereign Nations to determine appropriate funding mechanisms and distribution methods. Support data sovereignty and ensure low-barrier pathways for direct appropriation of state settlement dollars to Tribal Nations. Explore opportunities for traditional healing practices and culturally responsive care, through recurring funding to Tribal communities.