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# \$1M grant will help UK extension expand opioid prevention and recovery efforts

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LEXINGTON, Ky. — The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service recently received more than \$1 million to help further the organization's statewide educational efforts in opioid prevention and recovery.



The grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration will allow Cooperative Extension Service professionals to implement new programming efforts in south central and Western Kentucky during the next two years.

"Kentuckians said substance use and its related effects was the most significant issue facing the commonwealth today in extension's recently released community assessment survey. This grant will help us aggressively address this issue, and help set communities on the path to recovery," said Alison Davis, project lead and director of UK's Community Economic Development Initiative.

Many of the programs in this grant will continue to build on UK Cooperative Extension's existing efforts to reduce opioid use and aid in recovery efforts across the state. Extension already has successful programs in place that teach gardening, nutrition and life skills education to those recovering from substance use addiction and support programs for families with a loved one with a substance use disorder.

"The Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service is currently recognized as a leader among the land-grant university system for outreach efforts targeting substance use prevention and recovery," said Jennifer Hunter, assistant director for family and consumer sciences extension and one of the co-leaders on the grant. "We are excited to be able to continue to expand our educational efforts and enhance the level of resources available at the community level."

As part of the grant, extension will offer an Addiction 101 course geared toward health care workers, extension agents and community leaders. The program will talk about the science behind addiction including genetic and hereditary risk factors for developing an addiction disorder. Alex Elswick, UK extension specialist for substance use prevention and recovery, will lead the program.

“We want to remove the stigmas associated with addiction, so health care workers and community members feel more comfortable and equipped to help those struggling with opioid use addiction and recovery,” he said.

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abuse prevention program, to area middle school students.

Melissa Bond, program leader for UK's Arts Extension program, will partner with the UK College of Fine Arts to lead the arts expression component of the grant. This component will give individuals, families and communities a healthy, therapeutic outlet to express their feelings of anger and sadness with substance use addiction.

Financial issues tend to plague those recovering from a substance use disorder and can be a cause of subsequent relapses. To help these individuals, extension will expand their release of a financial education curriculum developed by Elswick and Kelly May, UK senior extension associate. The curriculum, “Recovering your Finances,” specifically addresses financial issues those in recovery may face and guidance for overcoming those obstacles. It is being piloted in Mercer County this fall and will also be offered in Boyd, Bourbon, Knox and Leslie counties through a grant UK received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Community Development Initiative.

Extension will also continue to offer support to local community health coalitions who are addressing substance use prevention and recovery.

Tags   Botvin LifeSkills Training   Lexington   opioid prevention   opioid recovery   opioids  
South Central Kentucky   Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration   UK College of Fine Arts  
UK Cooperative Extension Service   University of Kentucky   University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service  
Western Kentucky

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