



NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY**

County Executive Jen Metzger

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Ulster County Announces Projects Selected for Opioid Settlement Fund Awards

KINGSTON, NY - The Ulster County Executive's Office and Ulster County Department of Mental Health announced today that four projects have been chosen to receive an award from the County's Opioid Settlement Fund allocation. In November 2022, the County initiated a Request for Proposals for Opioid Response Projects and encouraged organizations to apply for funding for projects focused on prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and technology.

The priority areas were identified by the Ulster County Opioid Strategic Action Team (OSAT), a group led by the Ulster County Department of Mental Health (UCDMH). OSAT is composed of nearly 50 community organizations that meet monthly to review data and work together to develop strategies to reduce overdoses and fatalities. Twelve proposals were received and reviewed by an evaluation committee that included representatives from the Ulster County Department of Mental Health, the Ulster County Executive's Office, the Ulster County Department of Finance, and the Community Service Board.

The projects will be funded through Opioid Settlement funds received by Ulster County as part of a landmark settlement with Johnson & Johnson, a manufacturer of prescription opioids, and the three major pharmaceutical distributors — AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, and McKesson. Ulster County was awarded \$7.9M over 18 years as part of the agreement. In 2023, Ulster County will dedicate \$1.3 million of the settlement funds it has received toward new projects.

The four chosen projects include an Outpatient Detox Program, an Expanded Outpatient Treatment Program, support for a Recovery Housing Program, and development of an Opioid Overdose Spike Response Protocol.

- \$797,000 will be awarded to the Samadhi Recovery Community Outreach Center for three projects that fill critical gaps in the Ulster County behavioral health continuum of care.
 - \$410,400 to establish the first Outpatient Detox Program in the region. Samadhi will develop a medically-supervised outpatient detox program, which will reduce the need for out-of-county detox and inpatient care.
 - \$129,600 to expand Samadhi's licensed outpatient clinic with the addition of three Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASACs), one certified recovery peer advocate, and one administrative/billing staff member.
 - \$257,000 to expand staff at Samadhi Refuge – an emergency housing facility for adults with Substance Use Disorder seeking recovery – by adding four certified peer recovery advocates and a dedicated vehicle for transporting clients to appointments.
- \$74,985 will be awarded to Ellenville Regional Hospital to develop a targeted and collaborative response to opioid overdose spikes, which are defined as three or more overdoses in the County within a 24-hour period.

In addition to these projects, Ulster County has dedicated Opioid Settlement Funds toward a Mental Health in Schools program for middle school students, as well as a Street Outreach Program that will provide harm reduction education, naloxone kits, transportation to appointments, and connections to medication and treatment.

“The opioid crisis continues to take a major toll on our communities, particularly with the spread of deadly fentanyl on the streets, and we remain laser-focused as a County on pursuing prevention, treatment, and recovery solutions that will save lives,” said **Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger**. “I want to thank our community partners for submitting worthy projects to be supported by Opioid Settlement Funds, and I want to give special thanks to Attorney General Letitia James for her successful fight to secure these funds from the opioid manufacturers who aggressively pushed these highly-addictive drugs on people all across America and created the crisis we now face.”

“Though we continue to be saddened by the circumstances that resulted in these settlements, we are glad to be able to put these funds to good use and prevent future loss of life,” said **Tara McDonald, Ulster County Mental Health Commissioner**. “The Opioid Strategic Action Team has been working tirelessly for years to closely examine what is happening in our community and working together to identify the best approaches to reduce overdose and help our residents find a path to recovery. We are confident these four projects will fill vital gaps and strengthen our ability to fight this epidemic.”

David McNamara, Founder and Executive Director of The Samadhi Recovery Community Outreach Center said, "Samadhi is going to utilize the Opioid Settlement funding to develop and grow our continuum of care for individuals suffering from addiction. First, we will be developing the county's first Medically Supervised Outpatient Detox to treat the acute effects of opiate withdrawal and fulfill the desperate need for detox facilities in Ulster County. Second, we will expand our current Outpatient Treatment Center and increase our ability to provide individual and group substance use treatment in a compassionate, and trauma-informed manner. Third, we will be increasing the staffing at Samadhi Refuge, our emergency housing facility in Saugerties, NY, in order to provide further peer support, transportation, case management, and crisis intervention for the individuals living there. These three programs will allow Samadhi to provide a full spectrum of care for individuals with opioid use disorder regardless of recovery progress."

Steve Kelley, President of Ellenville Regional Hospital said, “We are very pleased to have been awarded funding to develop an opioid overdose spike response that unifies the effort of many agencies across the county to deliver much more timely, focused, and expansive outreach to the region experiencing the spike. The outcome will be to reduce overdoses and deaths.”

All awards are subject to approval by the Ulster County Legislature.
