



### **Agenda Action Form Overview**

The Board is requested to approve Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC023 in the amount of \$369,949 of year-4 funds to support grant award #5H79TI084839-04 to the Office of Emergency Services-EMS Division (OES-EMS) from the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and to authorize the County Manager to sign and execute all contracts for authorized and approved uses associated with the grant program throughout the grant's period of performance. The total grant award for year 4 funding is \$419,941 which includes \$49,992 in already budgeted personnel costs in the Approved FY 2025-26 Budget.

### **Background/Justification**

The First Responders – Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Support Services Act (FR-CARA) grant's purpose is to provide resources to first responders and members of other key community sectors at the state, tribal, and other government levels to train, carry and administer Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) approved drugs and devices for emergency reversal of known or suspected opioid overdose. As part of the grant application, OES has committed to establish processes, protocols, and mechanisms for: (1) referral to appropriate treatment and recovery support services support services, and (2) promote safety around fentanyl, carfentanil, and other dangerous licit and illicit drugs, and (3) provide naloxone to first responders for use during opioid overdose calls for service.

The grant has a period of performance from September 30, 2022, through September 29, 2026. Year – 1 period of performance ended September 29, 2023, and was recognized by the BOCC in the October 3, 2022, work session. Year – 2 period of performance ended September 29, 2024, and was recognized by the BOCC in the October 2, 2023, work session. Year – 3 period of performance ended September 29, 2024, and was recognized by the BOCC in the October 14, 2024, work session. It is a four (4) year project that is funded year to year subject to the availability of federal funds. Therefore, OES is requesting approval of year-4 funds. This is the final year of this grant unless SAMHSA offers an extension. The total federal funding potential if all 4-years are authorized and funded is \$1,257,378.

During the first three years of the grant, OES-EMS hired a contract program manager and program evaluator, began training for first responders, purchased supplies, and developed our program implementation. This was accomplished through partnerships with the first responder agencies, community agencies, and NC Harm Reduction Coalition. We initiated a field-inducted medication assisted treatment program under a separate grant. The purchase of the medication used for this purpose moved under this grant in year 2. These services continued in year 3.

Activities in the fourth year of the grant will continue to support the harm reduction activities implemented in year one. We are in the process of recruiting and hiring our Peer Support Specialist (fulltime FTE) which was approved in Year 2 funding. This position serves as the primary contact for patients seen by EMS for an opioid-related emergency. The Peer Support Specialist facilitates referrals to community MAT treatment centers and post-overdose follow-up with the Community Paramedics.

Additionally, OES-EMS will continue to collaborate with the Durham Joins Together to Save Lives



(DJT) task force to enhance and expand harm reduction efforts throughout Durham County. The project, the First Responder Addiction and Recovery Support (FRARS) program will accomplish this in three program-specific ways: (1) provide harm reduction resources in the form of intranasal naloxone for administration and fentanyl test strips for distribution to first responder agencies across the County of Durham. This includes County and City fire departments, all law enforcement agencies, and other first responder organizations including HEART, (2) provide harm reduction for administration and fentanyl test strips for distribution to community organizations at high risk for encountering opioid overdoses in their facilities or grounds, and (3) continue a post-overdose bridge program to provide medication assisted treatment (MAT) at the time of an initial overdose.

FRARS addresses overdose deaths and illness through several goals. (1) Increase the use of intranasal naloxone for vulnerable populations by increasing the availability of these drugs for all first responders and members of key community sectors. (2) Decrease unintentional opioid related deaths by 50% and overdose related emergency department visits by 50% among individuals living in Durham County by increasing availability of harm reduction supports for people with substance use disorders and at-risk for opioid overdose. (3) Ensure all individuals receiving intranasal naloxone receive effective referrals to community services providing appropriate culturally competent, trauma-informed treatment. (4) Increase public awareness and knowledge of harm reduction services, the impact of trauma, including adverse childhood experiences, “Good Samaritan” laws, and resource availability in Durham County. (5) Reduce racial disparities in rates of substance use, HIV/STIs and individual and community trauma by providing targeted outreach to historically marginalized communities in Durham County. (6) Facilitate field initiation of medication assisted treatment intended to reduce the risk of withdrawal symptoms and overdose deaths, initiate the individual into treatment, and make a warm handoff referral to community facilities for continued treatment, recovery, and other psychological supports.

At the close of the project period, the project team will provide a summary process and outcome evaluation reporting on the project activities as well as overall changes in opioid responses in Durham County.

### **Policy Impact**

This grant will enhance the capacity of the Durham Joins Together to Save Lives task force by providing additional harm reduction resources and treatment options for individuals experiencing opioid overdoses in the Durham community.

### **Procurement Background**

N/A

### **Fiscal Impact**

This grant is fully funded through the First Responder Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (FR-CARA). There is no requirement for matching funds. All monies will be provided in advance through DHHS and be available through the HHS Payment Management System. There is the potential to reduce the fiscal impact of overdose in the community through a reduction in 9-1-1 calls and emergency department visits.

### **Recommendation**



The County Manager recommends that the Board approve Budget Ordinance Amendment No.26BCC023 to recognize \$369,949 in year – 4 grant funding to the Office of Emergency Services-EMS (OES-EMS) from the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and to authorize the County Manager to sign and execute all contracts and purchases for authorized and approved uses associated with the grant program throughout the grant’s period of performance.