

\$2 Million in Grants Awarded to Combat Opioid Crisis

Grants will improve access to medication for opioid use disorder and overdoses, provide pharmacist training and more.

March 20, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

The Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) announced it is awarding \$2 million in grants to four organizations to expand access to medications for [opioid use disorder](#), such as buprenorphine, in pharmacies and emergency departments nationwide.

The recipients of the grants—the University of Houston College of Pharmacy, Howard University in Washington, DC, the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy and the Emergency Medicine Foundation—will receive the funding over the next two years.

“Medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder have proven to be highly effective in saving lives; however, access to these medications is often limited,” said Karen Scott, MD, MPH, the president of [FORE](#), in a [news release](#). “Pharmacies and emergency departments have a vital role in ensuring that patients receive the medications they need in a timely manner. We are providing funding to address stigma, lack of training and other barriers to treatment at these two critical access points.”

Since its inception in 2018, FORE has awarded 74 grants totaling \$33.9 million to address the nation’s opioid crisis.

The University of Houston College of Pharmacy will receive \$572,278 to support the launch of a collaboration between three schools of pharmacy and two national pharmacy organizations, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and the National Community Pharmacists Association. The collaboration will help teach pharmacists to properly assess prescriptions and dispense medication for people with opioid use disorder as well as develop guidelines for doing so.

Howard University will receive \$241,034 to address the disproportionate impact of opioid use disorder on Black residents of lower-income areas in Washington, DC, who have limited access to medications. Howard University aims to train at least 80 pharmacy personnel as well as introduce a treatment model called the Pharmacy-Physician-Peer Recovery Coach Collaborative in at least three nearby pharmacies.

Most pharmacies in rural Appalachian communities in Kentucky were found to be limiting their dispensing of buprenorphine or not dispensing it at all. To test a peer-to-peer, visiting education program for pharmacists to minimize stigma, eliminate barriers to dispensing and help pharmacists feel more confident in dispensing, the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy will receive \$496,130.

Finally, the Emergency Medicine Foundation, a nonprofit founded by the American College of Emergency Physicians, will receive \$793,003. The funding will build on a previous FORE grant to provide intensive coaching and support to 70 emergency departments nationwide to increase expand their ability to provide buprenorphine as well as the overdose-reversing drug naloxone to patients.