

Massachusetts Public Health Officials award \$720,000 for support services for young adults in recovery

Award will help people 18-25 recover from substance use disorder through life skills training and peer support

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced a \$720,000 grant award to the national organization Young People in Recovery for the development of statewide support programs for young adults recovering from substance addiction.

With this funding, Young People in Recovery will develop, build, and maintain seven recovery support networks strategically positioned in areas of critical need throughout the Commonwealth, providing young people ages 18-25 the life skills and peer supports they need to recover from opioid use, stimulant use, or other substance use disorders and co-occurring substance use and mental illness. The program launches in April 2021 with the capacity to serve approximately 1,400 people annually.

“As we cross the one-year mark of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic we remain aware of its serious impacts on those struggling with addiction, especially young people who may be experiencing social isolation as they social distance to stay safe,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “This award builds on the Commonwealth’s ongoing efforts to provide support to those who are seeking a way out of addiction and from the grip of the opioid epidemic.”

“Young people on the path to recovery from substance use disorder must be able to access a support network to help them

stay focused on their long-term life goals,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “This grant will help make these services accessible throughout the Commonwealth to support recovering young adults.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an extraordinary public health challenge in Massachusetts, particularly for many young adults, whose social, emotional, and mental well-being has been adversely affected. For those affected by substance use, this grant initiative seeks to forestall the kinds of trauma that can have long-term consequences when faced at such an important developmental stage.

“Studies have indicated that people between the ages of 18 and 25 are among the most impacted by substance use disorders,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders. “This program will provide young people the support, engagement, and skills they need to maintain recovery as they transition into adulthood, making important resources accessible during a time when we are combatting social and emotional isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on our lives.”

“Life can feel overwhelming for young adults negotiating critical life decisions for the first time, but even more so for young adults in recovery from substance abuse,” said Public Health Deputy Commissioner Margret Cooke. “Funding these crucial public health services will provide a stable community for young adults in recovery and guide them toward long-term success.”

“DPH and the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services are working to ensure that young people have the resources they need to begin and maintain their recovery from substance use disorder,” said Deirdre Calvert, Director of DPH’s Bureau of Substance Addiction Services. “Establishing support networks in Massachusetts communities that are most in need will provide the camaraderie, respect, and perseverance that young

people need to overcome substance use.”

The grant award will be distributed over the course of FY21-22. The program is funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) State Opioid Response (SOR) grant.