

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO ADDRESS SUBSTANCE USE IN RURAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

### **Authors:**

Palombi L<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Minnesota – College of Pharmacy, Duluth

### **Background:**

Community engagement, a practice in which the lived experience of community members is honored and valued, has shown promise in the development of models of care, intervention, and programming that meet individual community needs. Community engagement to address substance use integrates meaningful participation of community members with diverse experiences, values, cultures and perspectives.

### **Description of model of care/intervention/program:**

In rural Minnesota, community engagement to address substance use has led to a variety of public health interventions. These include community forums to address substance use, focus groups with individuals at various stages of recovery from a substance use disorder, surveys of individuals injecting drugs and individuals in recovery conducted in collaboration with harm reduction and recovery organizations, harm reduction vending machines and naloxone trainings that have trained thousands of community members. This presentation will review the community engagement approach that has led to innovations in community engaged programming and interventions.

### **Effectiveness:**

In partnership with communities, a variety of successful surveying, training and educational programs with diverse modalities were developed. Rural and Indigenous communities in northeastern Minnesota have accessed these programs to educate, train and learn from thousands of individuals in the region; hundreds of lives were saved from naloxone training and distribution alone.

### **Conclusion and next steps:**

Community engagement is an effective way to develop sustainable and community-wide substance use prevention, intervention, recovery and harm reduction efforts.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.