



# EXTENSION IMPACTS - FOCUSING ON LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

## INTRODUCTION

USU Extension is well known for its role in improving local agriculture and building community resilience across rural Utah. We are continuously responding to changing community needs and issues as we strive to provide relevant educational programs to all individuals. While we develop and implement traditional agriculture and family and consumer science programs, Extension faculty and staff are nimble and able to quickly adapt to ensure our programs have the greatest impact across Utah communities.

I invite you to read this issue of Outcomes and Impact Quarterly to learn more about our programs and how we are working to serve agricultural communities, feed families, reduce substance abuse, and improve residents' overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

**Kenneth L. White**

Dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; Vice President, Extension and Agriculture



Photo by Ernesto Lopez

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# — ADDRESSING OPIOIDS AND PRESSING PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES —

Ashley C. Yaugher, Mateja R. Savoie-Roskos, Verlina Adame, Gabriela Murza, Tim Keady, Sadie Wilde, and Maren Wright Voss



The rates of opioid overdoses experienced in the state of Utah have consistently been higher than the national average. In 2019, **8 out of 10** adult overdose deaths each week were due to opioids, and half of those were specifically due to prescription opioids.

USU's Health Extension: Advocacy, Research, & Teaching (HEART) Initiative addresses the opioid epidemic and other pressing public health issues in Utah. Data collected from HEART collaborations, acquired funding, and programming over the past three years demonstrates HEART's collective impact on the state's opioid epidemic.

Through county- and state-level partnerships, HEART faculty have implemented 66 activities statewide. Some include opioid education dinners in "hot spots," Tooele Rural Opioid Healthcare Consortium, PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER), Informing the National Narrative: Stories of Utah's Opioid Crisis, and additional community education programs and presentations.

## HEART Initiative 2018-2021 Programming Results



# — COMMUNICATING PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND IMPACT —

Amanda D. Ali, Paul A. Hill, and Dominic C. Bria

Many Extension programs obtain funding from county, state, and/or federal agencies that require frequent program performance and effectiveness. The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) mandates all agencies to collect, analyze, and report on their performance. The GPRA's performance benchmarks within the Cooperative Extension System relate to relevance, quality, and accomplishments. These metrics are obtained from robust evaluation plans. Communicating real-time data on program results can inform funders of program performance and outcomes in a timely manner.

The Rural Online Initiative (ROI) program created data dashboards for its Master Remote Work Professional and Leader certificate courses. The objectives were to create visually appealing dashboards that easily communicate statistical data, use these dashboards to report on GPRA's benchmarks of performance for Extension, and provide shareable real-time data on program outcomes to funding agencies. Data dashboards for the courses were created in Zoho Analytics. Widgets and interactive graphs and charts were then created with dashboards, set to automatically update with new course enrollments. This ensures updated information can be shared with stakeholders on demand as they check in for accountability and transparency measures. Additionally, the dashboards allow for easy reporting for mid-year and year-end assessments.

As the ROI program continues to expand, it becomes essential to track program outcomes and impact in real-time, and Data Visualization Dashboards have proven to be an excellent way to communicate the necessary information.



# BUILDING A RECOVERY-READY COMMUNITY IN TOOELE COUNTY

Maren Wright Voss, Gabriele Ciciurkaite, Erin Fanning Madden, Katie Zaman, and Sandra H. Sulzer



Tooele County, Utah, has among the highest rates of opioid overdose deaths and the lowest treatment options in Utah (see Figure 1). USU Extension developed the Tooele Rural Opioid Healthcare Consortium to address these needs, with \$1,000,000 in funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), to implement culturally responsive community approaches to prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The consortium focused on stigma reduction (community awareness campaigns and harm reduction trainings for professionals), expanding substance use disorder (SUD) workforce capacity (paraprofessional certifications and funding), and increasing community-level support for persons in recovery (shared community events, economic aid, and naloxone distribution). The consortium has hosted community events, trainings, and funding supports to accomplish these objectives.

## Harm Reduction Trainings

15 trainings | 175 individuals trained

30-50%

increase in knowledge of evidence-based, stigma-reducing treatment options

## Community Recovery Events

6 events | 500+ attendees

100s of prevention and recovery resources distributed

40%

of community respondents want more community support for recovery

## Agency Support

Increase from 4 to 15 consortium member agencies

## First Responder Summit

8 partner organizations

60 law enforcement professionals trained

800 Overdose reversal medication kits (naloxone kits) provided as individuals leave incarceration

## Funding Partnerships

\$12,000 in naloxone kits distributed

\$20,000 in funding provided to 4 local agencies in 2020

\$434,000 in new funding acquired for 2021

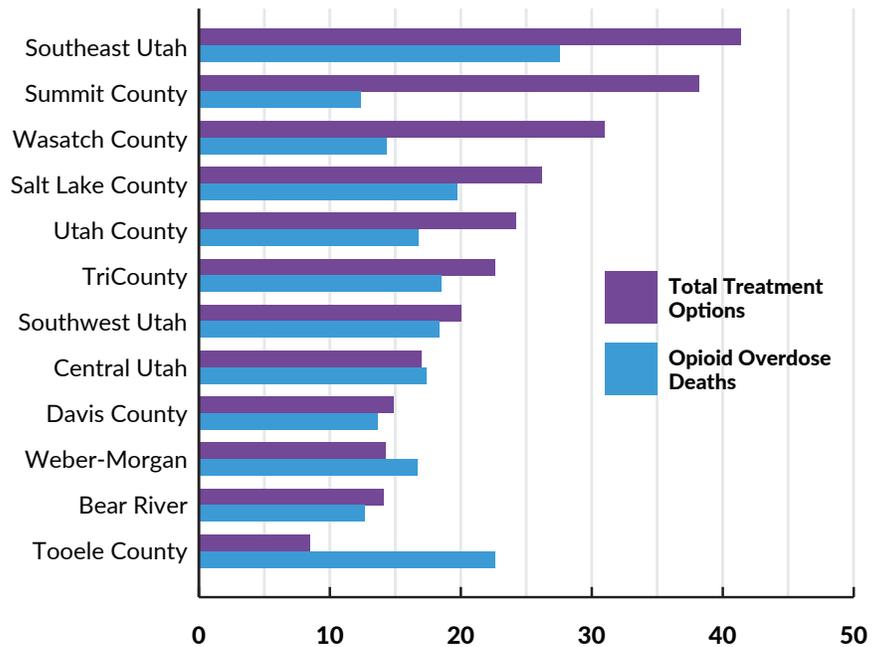
## Expanding Treatment Capability

3 medication-assisted treatment trainings conducted and one paraprofessional training

40%

increase in prescribers with necessary training

Figure 1- Opioid Overdose Deaths vs. Medication Treatment Options by Local Health District (Per 100,000 Population Age 18+), 2019



Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2020.



# SUPPORTING LOCAL AGRICULTURE

LaCee Jimenez, Hiram Wigant, Casey Coombs, and Heidi LeBlanc

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):

10%

of Utahns do not have reliable access to the food they need to live a healthy and active life.



A recent statewide assessment showed that addressing hunger and supporting local food systems are critical issues in Utah. The Utah Department of Health reported that many Utahns with lower incomes were not eating sufficient servings of fruits and vegetables.

USU Create Better Health, formerly known as Utah's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education Program (SNAP-Ed), is well-positioned to support local food systems and facilitate access to fresh fruits and vegetables for those experiencing food insecurity.

Create Better Health personnel formed the Buy Produce for Your Neighbor healthy food drive initiative to address food insecurity and low consumption of fruits and vegetables. Staff promoted fresh, local produce donations at farmers markets. Donors dropped off extra produce they purchased at the farmers market, then Create Better Health staff and partners delivered it to local food pantries. The program began the summer of 2019 and adapted to include donations from communities that do not have farmers markets.

The program has been particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, food pantry clients have expressed a desire for more fresh food options. The increase in donations of high-quality, fresh produce addresses these needs, and since donations are purchased from local farmers, it also helps local agriculture.

The Utah Food Bank reported a

300%

increase in the demand for food assistance.

## PROVIDING PESTICIDE CREDITS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Michael Wierda, Cody Zesiger, Jacob Hadfield, Michael Pace, and Paige Wray

Each year, USU Extension and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food provide face-to-face Pesticide Safety Education and Applicator Training to commercial, noncommercial, and private pesticide license holders. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face meetings in Utah were canceled in 2020. This left those seeking continuing education units (CEUs) for license renewal with limited options.

8 virtual events in 2020

3

CEU credits in pesticide safety, law, and use offered

24

presentations provided

2,992

credit hours earned by Utah pest management professionals



Participants were invited to complete a survey after the events to evaluate their satisfaction with the events and changes in knowledge and intended behaviors. Results indicated participants experienced an increase in their knowledge related to most topics covered during the private and commercial applicator events.

Given the prolonged effect of COVID-19, virtual pesticide events are likely to continue. Fortunately, based on the evaluation results, transitioning to a Zoom platform did not impede CEU delivery to applicators.

Given the success of these virtual events from USU Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP), applicators in Utah can benefit from a wider range of learning opportunities to maintain their pesticide licenses. USU PSEP's goal is to develop hybrid CEU events offering options for group gatherings while still allowing for remote participation by attendees and presenters.