

Opioid Needs Assessment Report for Staunton City, Augusta County, and Waynesboro City: Findings and Recommendations

September 2024

Prepared by Knowledge Advisory Group and the Carter Foundation



Project Overview

Project Overview

Background

The City of Staunton, Augusta County, and the City of Waynesboro (the SAW region) conducted this needs assessment as part of their planning for the use of funds from the National Opioid Settlement. These funds may be used for programs designed to treat, prevent, or reduce opioid use disorder or the misuse of opioids.

Opioid misuse can include taking more than the prescribed dose or taking it more often, using it to get high, or taking someone else's opioids.

The risk of ***opioid use disorder*** (which is sometimes referred to as opioid dependence or addiction) is higher when opioids are misused.

Common prescription opioids include OxyContin, Percocet, Morphine, Methadone, Codeine, and Fentanyl.

Project Overview

Background

- Needs assessment began in December 2023.
- Encompasses Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro.
- Funded by a planning grant from the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA).
- The OAA was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2021 *"to abate and remediate the opioid epidemic in the Commonwealth."*
- The OAA administers financial support from the Opioid Abatement Fund to treat, prevent, and reduce opioid use disorder and the misuse of opioids.

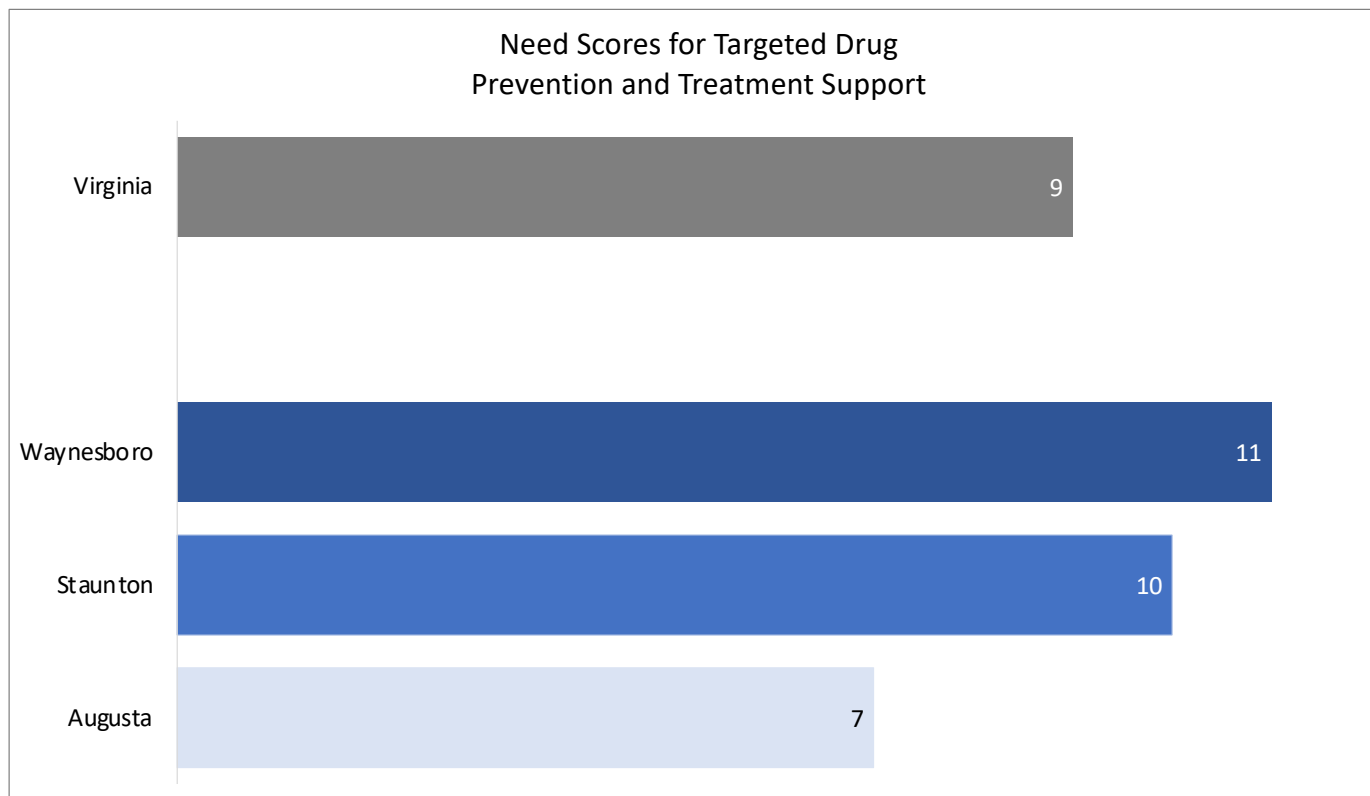
Project Overview

Methodology

- **Reviewed background documents** such as the *Code of Virginia* relevant to the OAA and research on evidence-based strategies to address opioid misuse
- **Conducted interviews** from 10 organizations in the region to determine the needs and resources available to individuals who misuse opioids.
- **Provided a survey** to a broader group of community stakeholders
- **Reviewed published community health data** and opioid abatement resources for the SAW localities.
- **Facilitated three town hall meetings** to gather input from community residents

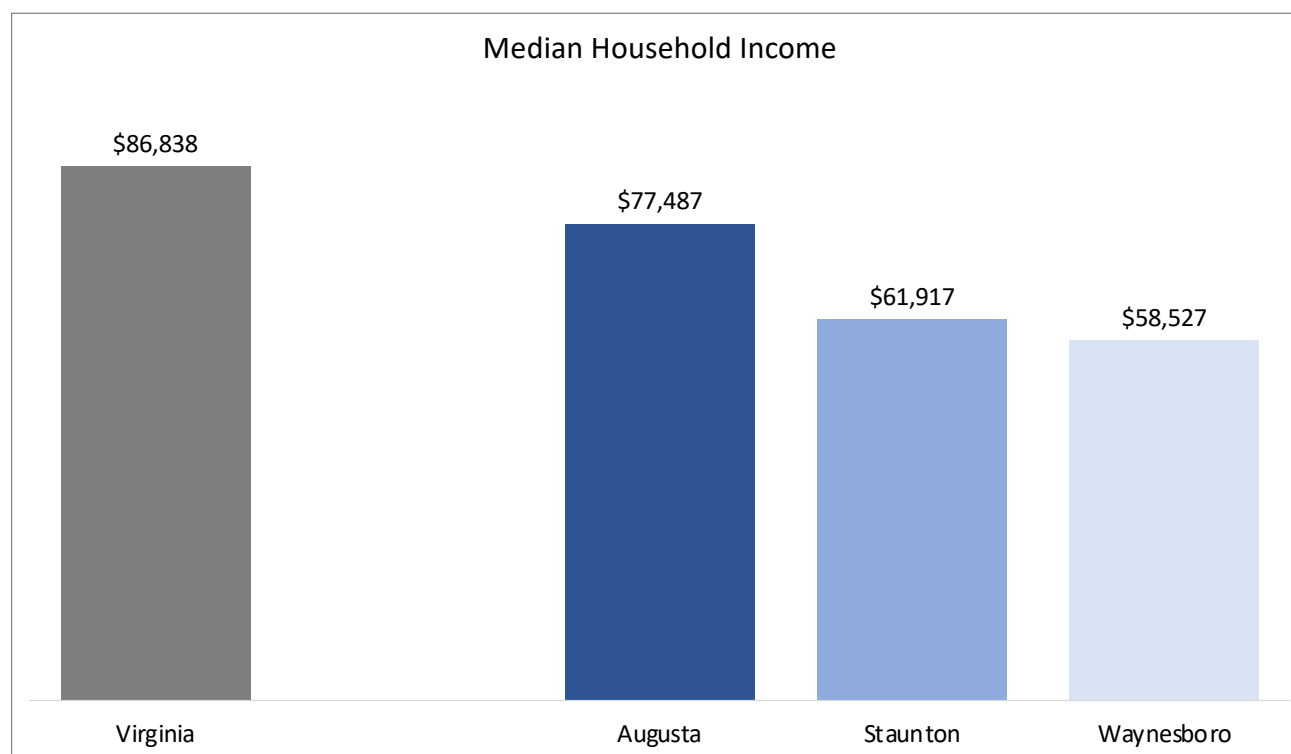
Key Findings

KEY FINDING 1: Two of the localities within the SAW region (Staunton and Waynesboro) are classified by the Virginia Department of Health as high need for targeted drug prevention and treatment support, and there is evidence to suggest that opioids are one of the drugs misused by residents.



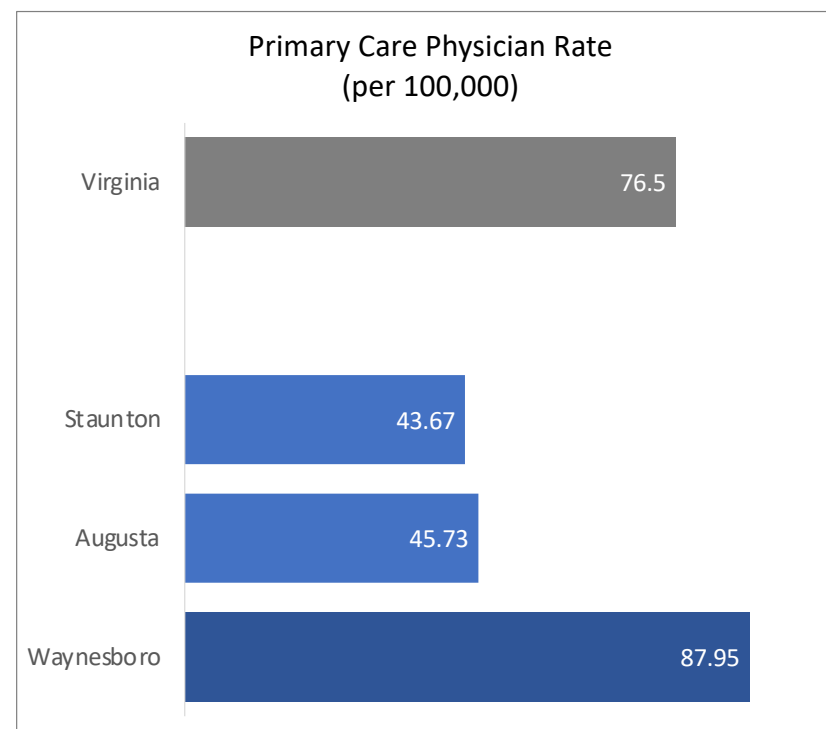
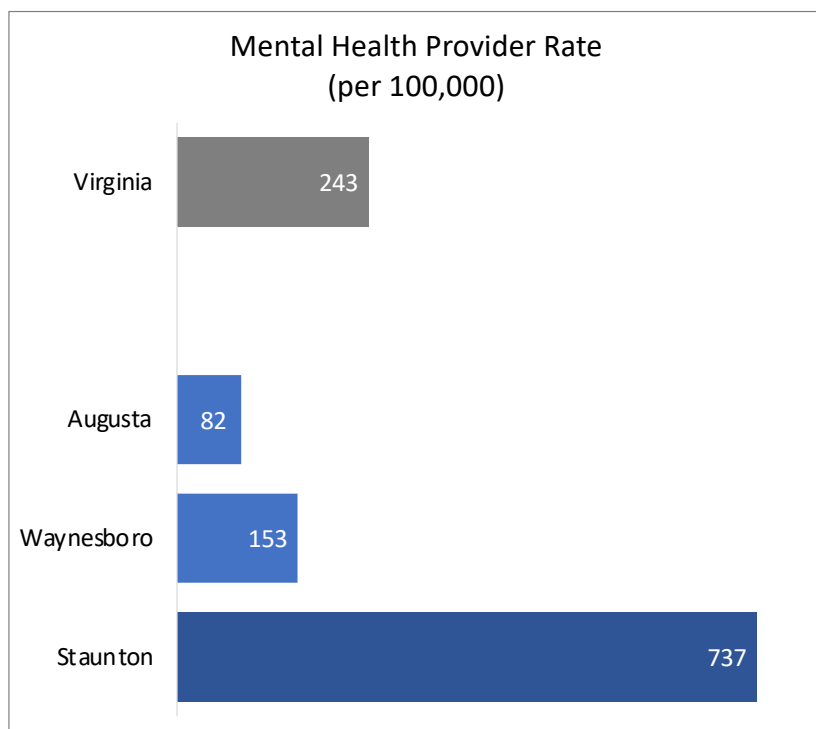
Source: Virginia Department of Health

KEY FINDING 2: Relatively poor economic conditions in the SAW region may contribute to opioid misuse among its residents.



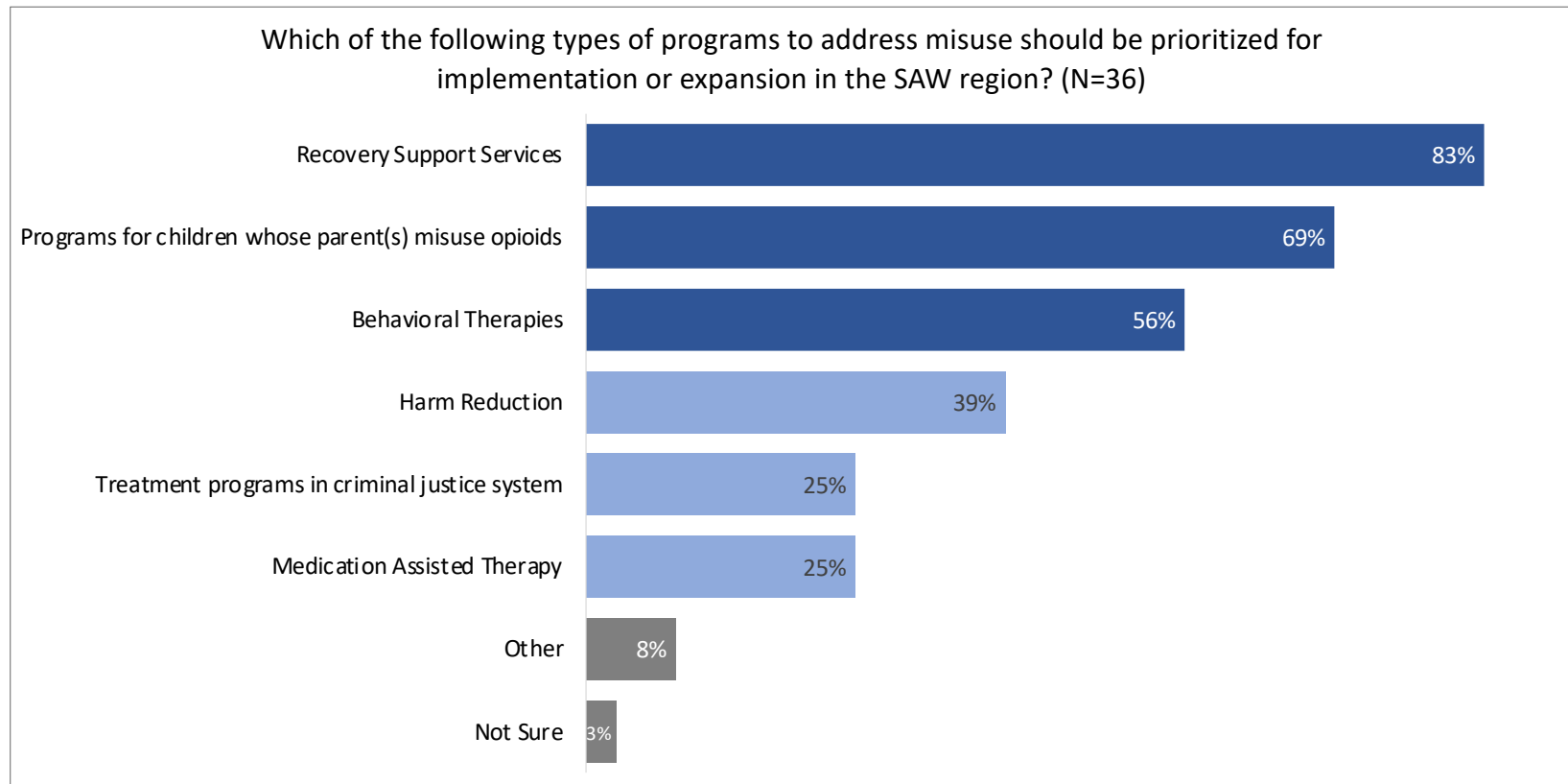
Source: Five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey

KEY FINDING 3: Residents of the SAW region have access to fewer mental health and primary care providers compared to Virginia overall, which likely makes it more difficult for those with substance use disorders (including opioid misuse) to obtain help from trained professionals.



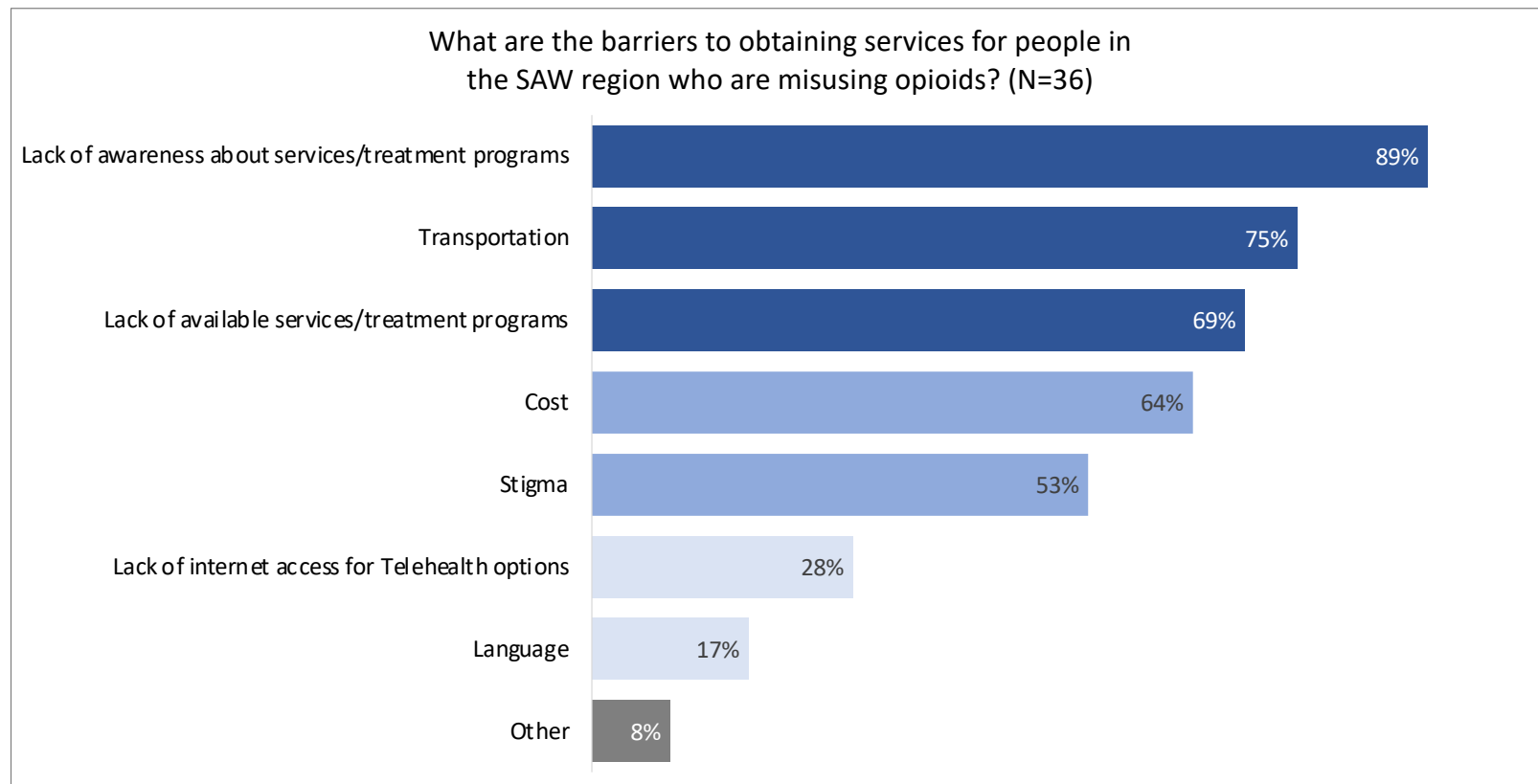
Source: Provider workforce supply data from US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, HRSA - Area Health Resource File. Accessed via County Health Rankings, 2021-2023

KEY FINDING 4: Stakeholders recommend implementation or expansion of recovery support services, programs for children whose parents misuse opioids, and behavioral therapies, and residents suggested consideration of additional possible strategies to address opioid misuse.



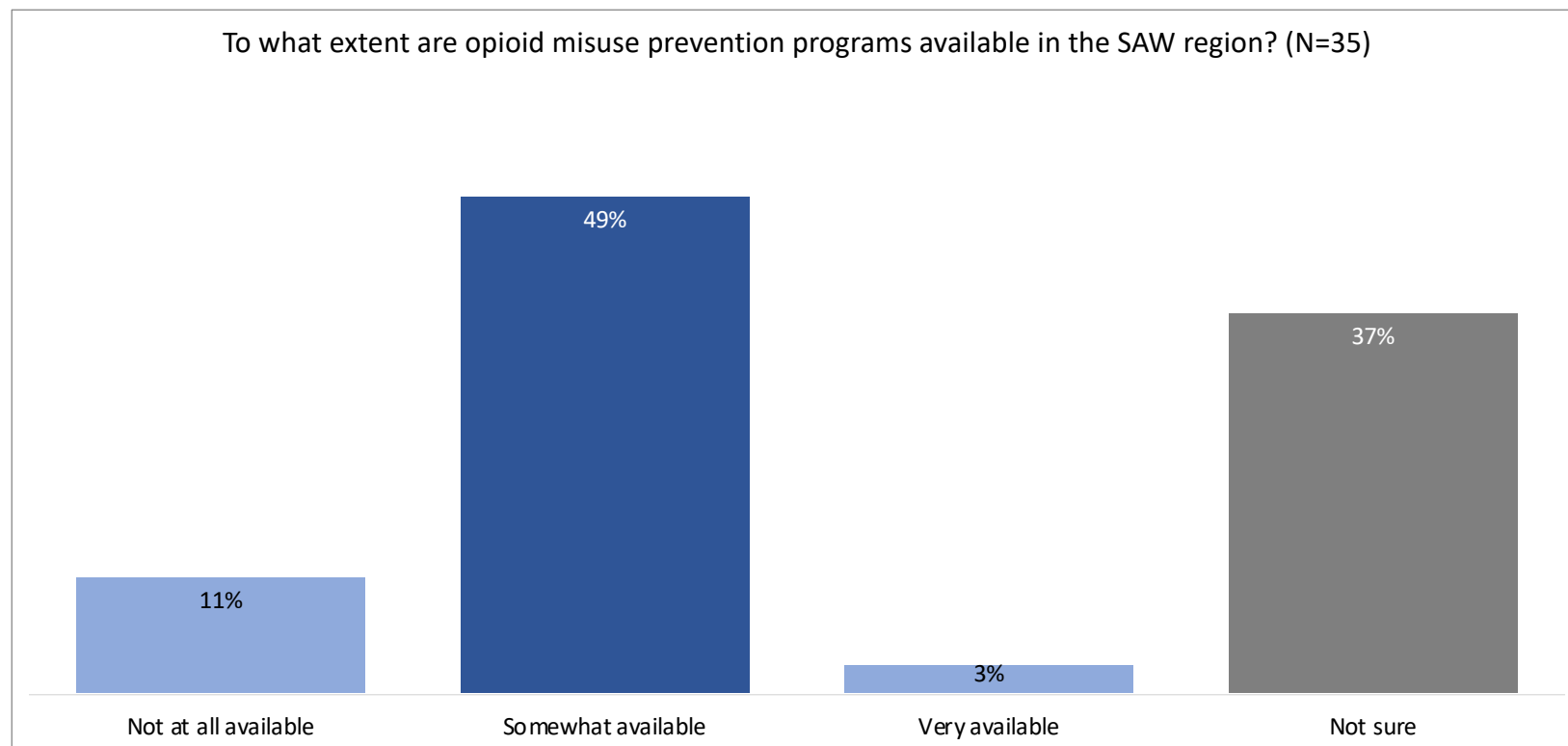
Source: SAW Community Stakeholder Survey, 2024.

KEY FINDING 5: The most common barriers to obtaining services for opioid misuse are lack of awareness about services/treatment programs, transportation, and lack of available services/treatment programs.



Source: SAW Community Stakeholder Survey, 2024.

KEY FINDING 6: According to community stakeholders, opioid misuse prevention programs are *Somewhat Available* in the SAW region, but they only mentioned a few “light touch” programs available through the Office on Youth and Valley CSB when asked to identify them.



Source: SAW Community Stakeholder Survey, 2024.

Primary Recommendations On Funding Priorities

Primary Recommendations

Expand the number of substance use disorder providers and the array of evidence-based programs and services to address opioid misuse.

1. Expand number of substance use disorder (SUD) providers.
2. Expand recovery support services for opioid misuse.
3. Expand programs for children whose parents misuse opioids.
4. Expand opioid misuse prevention and education efforts.
5. Consider expanding harm reduction programs, providing additional funding for a planned detoxification and crisis center, and providing local access to inpatient treatment.

Additional Recommendations

Additional Recommendations

Address common barriers to accessing treatment for opioid misuse.

6. Improve awareness about services/treatment programs to address opioid misuse.
7. Improve transportation options for residents who need services for opioid misuse.

Additional Recommendations

Create a coordinated response to address opioid misuse in the SAW region.

8. Establish a planning and oversight committee to track initiatives related to opioid misuse in the region.
9. To the extent possible, enhance information-sharing agreements among agencies who may wish to coordinate services for residents.
10. Create a standardized process for responding to opioid events that prioritizes immediate help over incarceration.

Additional Recommendations

Implement other established principles for the use of opioid settlement funds.

- 11. Spend the money to save lives.
- 12. Use evidence to guide spending.
- 13. Focus on racial equity.

Additional Recommendations

Develop a competitive grant application for OAA funding.

14. Submit a collaborative application to the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) for additional grant funding.
15. Consider other factors that will be used by the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) to prioritize the distribution of opioid abatement funding in Virginia.
16. Use OAA resources to develop a comprehensive plan and budget.

Additional Recommendations

Identify service providers to address community needs to address opioid misuse.

17. Develop an RFP process to identify service providers for the implementation of opioid abatement programs.

Closing

THANK YOU!

Contact:

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if you have further comments or questions.