



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Opioid Community Needs Assessment to Guide Kalamazoo County's Opioid Settlement Strategy

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – Kalamazoo County launched the Opioid Community Needs Assessment (OCNA) today to deepen our understanding of the opioid crisis and empower us to make the best use of National Opioid Settlement funding to save lives, prevent opioid use, and remedy the impacts opioids have on our community.

“Collaboration is critical in solving the opioid crisis. The feedback we receive will help us understand where we can best support organizations that are actively doing the work of implementing substance use prevention strategies,” Deputy County Administrator for External Services Lyndi Smith said. “And not only that, but where there may be opportunities to fill in any gaps to leverage existing partnerships and funding streams to reduce duplication and maximize community benefit.”

The County joined forces with the [Opioid Prevention and Education Network-Michigan State University](#) (OPEN-MSU) as part of a new technical assistance collaborative to develop the OCNA and identify the most pressing needs of Kalamazoo County in addressing the harms of substance use and preventing overdose deaths. OPEN-MSU will compile the results and provide a full report to the community and Board of Commissioners in late fall.

Available on the County website through **Sept. 22**, the survey aims to bring together our community members' expertise and lived experiences to identify local strategies, inform new funding opportunities, and strengthen the community's understanding from a variety of perspectives.

“Lived experience is a powerful teacher, and those who have faced the challenges of addiction firsthand possess invaluable insights. The opioid crisis affects people from all walks of life, regardless of age, race, or socioeconomic status. It's a complex challenge that requires empathy, collaboration, and a commitment to supporting those in their journey to recovery,” Smith said.

All community members are welcome and encouraged to contribute by completing the 10-minute survey at <https://bit.ly/3QYyFj4>. Rest assured that your responses will remain entirely anonymous, safeguarding your privacy. The survey is available in English and Spanish, but translation services will be provided for any other languages if needed. Accommodations due to a disability upon request.

OPEN-MSU will offer the first 250 community members the opportunity for a \$15 Amazon gift card after completing the survey.

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