

# MHRB awarded \$100K grant to fund heroin response team

[Kathleen Williams](#)



Kelly Firesheets, far left, of Interact for Health, presents check to Quick Response Team at Opiate Task Force meeting Jan. 12. Others, from left: Rhonda Birkhimer, Jessica Johnson, Kristy Mudd (all peer specialists at Clermont Recovery Center); Lee Ann Watson; Lt. Matt Terrell, Union Township EMS; Gregg Pieples, Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services.

CINCINNATI, Ohio (Jan. 23, 2017) — The Funders' Response to the Heroin Epidemic (FRHE) announced today they have awarded grants to the communities of Colerain Township and Clermont County to support their efforts to solve the heroin epidemic. Each will receive \$100,000 over a three-year period to develop and implement Quick Response Teams (QRT) – a

model of “deflection” where law enforcement, first responders, and treatment professionals work together to provide a collaborative response to opioid users and their families following an overdose. The goal is to connect people to treatment and prevent future overdoses.

FRHE is a collaboration of private funders dedicated to ending the Greater Cincinnati region’s opiate and heroin epidemic and is an operating program of InterAct for Change. FRHE works to support and strengthen local communities in their response to opioid misuse and addiction through funding and strategic support.

QRT capitalizes on the “recovery window” – a period shortly following an opioid overdose when people who are addicted are open to intervention. Members of the QRT (law enforcement, EMS, and a treatment specialist) visit the home of a person who recently overdosed and offer support services to the individual and his families. QRT then continues to follow up over time, encouraging him to seek treatment, and works to remove barriers and obstacles that may come up as he/she engages in the treatment system. Individuals and their families rely on the QRT for emotional support, information, coaching, encouragement, and links to resources.

“FRHE is focused on fueling community efforts to end the heroin epidemic by expanding and investing in effective practices,” said Kelly Firesheets, Senior Program Officer of Interact for Health and representative of FRHE. “By reaching heroin users when they are most open to treatment, QRTs gives us the best chance to connect them to treatment, with the hope of long-term recovery.”

## **Clermont County**

FRHE will fund the [Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board](#) (MHRB) to implement a QRT that will intervene with Clermont County

residents who have survived an overdose at one of two locations: Union Township or Mercy Hospital Clermont.

“In Clermont County, increased naloxone distribution and heightened awareness mean that more people are surviving opioid overdose,” said Dr. Lee Ann Watson, Associate Director of the MHRB, and Co-Chair of the County’s Opiate Task Force. “The QRT will partner first responders with treatment professionals who can connect people to needed substance use disorder treatment at a time they are most actively seeking it.”

The Clermont County QRT will receive consultation from the Hamilton County QRT as it sets up operations. It will primarily be a partnership between Union Township Fire Department and the Clermont Recovery Center. The Clermont County QRT will include several members:

- 1 Recovery Coach (funded by FRHE)
- 3 Recovery Coach Specialists
- 1 Outreach Worker
- 1 Counselor/Case Manager
- 1 Fire/EMS representative (Union Township has committed to providing 1 FTE to the team)

Overdose survivors will either be identified by the Mercy Clermont emergency department, or by Union Township dispatch information. Members of QRT will follow up with overdose survivors within five working days, reaching an estimated 150 individuals per year.

## **Colerain Township**

In Colerain Township, FRHE will provide funding to the Addiction Services Council to add a Peer Engagement Specialist to the existing QRT. A Peer Engagement Specialist is a person in recovery from addiction who receives a

professional certification that allows him/her to support people with addictions and their families.

“The Quick Response Team represents the type of collaboration our communities need to end this epidemic, said Dan Malloy, safety service director of Colerain Township. “The addition of a peer engagement specialist provides the team with the unique perspective and connection needed to reach those battling addiction, with the goal being successful recovery.”

The QRT Peer Engagement Specialist will provide services in the community that allows QRT to provide ongoing support to an estimated 50 people in recovery and their families, including:

- Maintain contact with the family and kinship network during the treatment and recovery support process.
- Provide post-treatment recovery support, education (groups, information, etc.) and re-engagement when necessary.
- Facilitate family support groups and recovery support groups.

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## **About FRHE**

*Funders’ Response to the Heroin Epidemic (FRHE) is a collaboration of private funders dedicated to ending the Greater Cincinnati region’s opioid and heroin epidemic. FRHE provides financial resources and strategic support strengthen local communities’ response to opioid misuse and addiction. FRHE is operated by [InterAct for Change](#), a nonprofit subsidiary of [Interact for Health](#). For more information on the FRHE visit [www.interactforchange.org](http://www.interactforchange.org).*