

Fall 2025 General Council

Opioid Response Manager Report

Mission Statement

To reduce opioid addiction and the devastating impacts to the families and communities on the Nez Perce Reservation.

Vision

To support, expand and create resources for prevention, treatment and recovery services to reduce or prevent opioid-related deaths and overdoses. To represent a unified and culturally responsive approach to combating the opioid crisis, aiming to restore balance and well-being to our communities.

Staff

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Budget

\$111,537.11

Source

Opioid Settlement Funds

Opioid Task Force

Nez Perce Tribal Programs

- Office of Executive Direction
- Office of Enterprise Executive Officer
- Office of Law & Order Executive Office
- Office of Nimiipuu Health Executive Director
- Nimiipuu Health Medical Director
- Tribal Emergency Management Director
- Tribal Police Chief
- Tribal Chief Judge
- Communications Manager
- Social Service Manager
- Office of the Nez Perce Tribal Housing Executive Director
- Behavior Health
- Wisteqn'emit

Non-Tribal

- Healing Lodge of the Seven Nations
- Public Health-Idaho Northwest District
- Nez Perce County Jail
- Asotin County Jail
- Orofino and Cottonwood Detention Facilities
- Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest (ATNI)
- National Congress of the American Indians (NCAI)

Culturally, the opioid epidemic has disrupted the traditional way of life for the Nez Perce people. Addiction not only affects the physical health of individuals but also severs their connection to cultural and spiritual practices that are vital for holistic well-being. The loss of cultural continuity and the erosion of traditional values have left many community members feeling isolated and disconnected, further perpetuating the cycle of addiction.

Prevention

The Nez Perce Tribe Education Department, Social Services Department, Nimiipuu Health and the Law and Order Departments are committed to prevention, restorative justice and recovery efforts using our own cultural identity and practices.

Culture is Prevention programming for use at activities, conferences, and other associated educational opportunities.

Implement programming that targets to teens through activities, including a series of summer camps and Youth Leadership activities involve more than 300 of youth throughout the reservation and beyond.

Continued support for each tribal program is a continuous effort and has promoted a healthy active and safe environment for our youth.

Restorative Justice/ Judicial

Restorative Justice in our tribal system focuses on Re-establishing harmony and balance, Prioritizing healing over punishment, Placing the victim and community at the center, holding offenders accountable through responsibility, using inclusive, community-led processes and Supporting reintegration.

The NPT Law & Order department works closely with the Nimiipu Health Behavior Health Staff and our Social Service Departments to include these important concepts in repairing the harm done physically, emotional and spiritually to our members.

The Nez Perce Tribe operates our own Healing to Wellness Court and is currently developing a Peacemakers Court.

Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts are restorative justice components of the Tribal Court. To the extent they operate a docket, adjudicate cases, and most critically, heal and restore members and the community, some Tribes have noted their existence in the Tribal code.

Tribal court peacemaking is a restorative, community-based conflict resolution process rooted in Indigenous traditions, utilizing talking circles and guided by elders to heal relationships and restore harmony to the community

Prescribing Practices

The Nez Perce Reservation has been significantly impacted by the opioid crisis, with over-prescription of opioid medications being a critical contributing factor. Addressing prescribing practices is essential to curbing the misuse of opioids and preventing new cases of addiction.

Our Nimiipuu Health clinicians and professionals strive to lower the number of opioid prescriptions and provide alternative care to decrease addiction rates. Promoting alternative pain management methods is another critical component of this strategy. The Nez Perce Reservation aims to create a sustainable and culturally responsive approach to pain management, ultimately reducing the prevalence of opioid addiction and its devastating impacts on the community.

Community and Public Education

Collaboration with local organizations, healthcare providers, and cultural leaders has been essential to the success of the public education initiative. The public education campaign also includes a strong focus on harm reduction. By educating the community about the availability and proper use of naloxone (Narcan®), the campaign aims to reduce the number of opioid-related overdoses and deaths. The Nimiipuu Health Department works very hard in collaboration with other tribal departments to educate and promote harm reduction.

Integration of Traditional Values and Practices

The integration of traditional values and practices is paramount to the success of the Nez Perce Reservation Opioid Response. By embedding traditional values and practices into the opioid response strategy, we aim to restore balance and well-being to the Nez Perce community. This culturally centered approach not only addresses the immediate crisis but also fosters long-term resilience and cultural continuity.

Included in our efforts there have been several ‘Men’s Group” meetings that have targeted the young adult males as well as adult males seeking to restore lost cultural pathways and practices.

These men's groups provide culturally appropriate support, healing, and empowerment for men and boys, often addressing issues stemming from intergenerational trauma and promoting connection to culture, family, and community through programs focused on mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. These public forums stress a need for places or sites in each community to provide for the procuring of our gathering of traditional foods and medicines as well as our fish and game harvested. A site where we can come together as a community and family to continue our own traditions and honor our youth in many of our rights of passage. The community sweat lodge is a paramount need in each community as well.

Nimiipuu sweat lodge are used as a form of holistic therapy, providing physical, mental, and spiritual benefits by promoting detoxification, encouraging introspection, and strengthening community connections.

The Opioid Task Force continues to meet and identify needs within our tribal structure, which include continued funding opportunities and support for every program.

In 2024 we suffered 3 overdose deaths and several other overdoses which required the use of Narcan. We are currently in the 4th quarter of 2025 and we have NOT experienced an overdose death due to opioid misuse.

In summary the Opioid Response Program continues to work in all aspects of prevention and recovery efforts to slow the progress of this serious problem that plagues our homes and the families we love.

Our strategic plan aims to lower the overdose death rate from opiates and provide a healthy overall environment.