

**From Coast to Forest:  
Building on Community Strengths to Promote Mental Health and Reduce Opioid Abuse in Rural Oregon**

Project dates: 9/1/2019 to 08/31/2021

Current locations: Tillamook, Lincoln, Union, and Baker Counties, Oregon

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The OSU Extension Family and Community Health Program and the OSU Center for Health Innovation are introducing a new collaboration around mental health promotion and substance misuse prevention. The project, *From Coast to Forest: Building on Community Strengths to Promote Mental Health and Reduce Opioid Abuse in Rural Oregon* (Coast to Forest), is scheduled to begin September 1, 2019 and run for two years. Coast to Forest is funded through the Rural Health and Safety Education program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the US Department of Agriculture.

The Coast to Forest initiative proposes to build upon existing, underleveraged state and community strengths and resources to address gaps in educational, preventive and systems-level approaches to the opioid and mental health crisis. The strengths include: a growing network of Community Health Workers (CHW) being trained through the Oregon State University Center for Health Innovation at the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, in coordination with healthcare providers and health insurance companies; a Mental Health First Aid network that needs additional capacity to reach all communities in the state, particularly rural; community-level partnerships that are poised to incorporate mental health and substance abuse more centrally into their work; and radio stations that have reached out to Oregon State University (OSU) Family and Community Health Extension Program to collaborate on monthly programming relevant to their communities' health and wellness.

**Goals** of the Coast to Forest initiative are to (1) reduce opioid misuse and abuse and their sequelae and to (2) improve mental health and well-being in four rural/frontier Oregon counties: Lincoln, Tillamook, Baker, and Union.

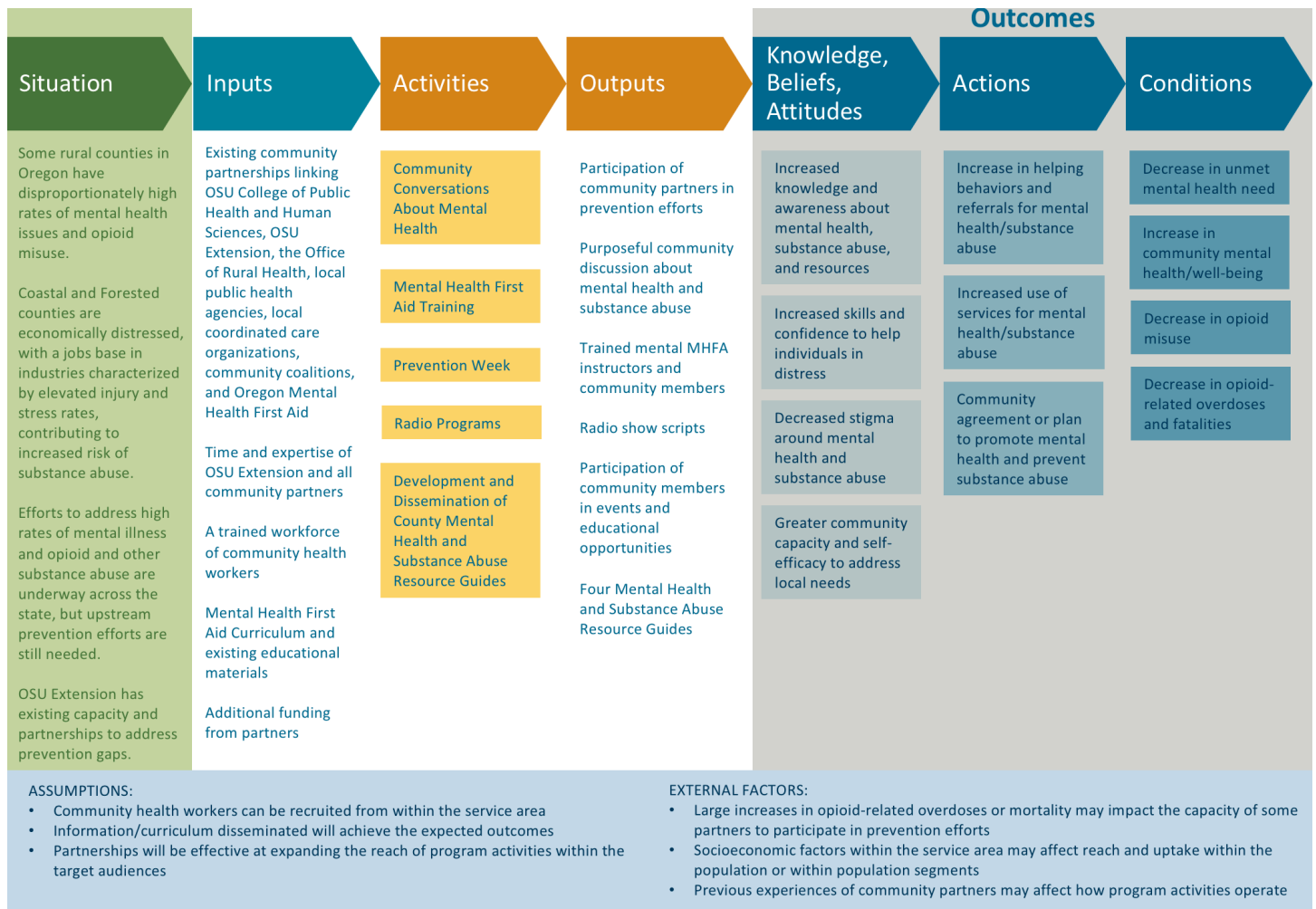
**Outcome objectives** in the short and medium-term reflect changes in knowledge, skills, behavior and community change:

1. Increased knowledge and awareness about mental health, substance abuse and available resources;
2. Decreased stigma related to substance abuse and mental health;
3. Increased skills and confidence for helping community members in distress;
4. Increased helping behaviors and referrals for mental health and substance abuse;
5. Increased use of mental health and substance abuse services;
6. Greater community efficacy to address local needs through community change; and
7. Development of community-driven plans to promote mental health and prevent substance abuse.

**Evidence-based project activities** include:

- A. Community Conversations about Mental Health will leverage existing partnerships, and guide/facilitate strategic conversations and planning according to evidence-based toolkit with four "sessions"(Sharing Experiences, Discussion of Challenges, Exploration of Response, Community Solutions) as deemed appropriate with partners
- B. Mental Health First Aid Training for adult community members will be delivered in each region (Coast, Forest) at four time points. Anticipated participants are Public health, social service and healthcare providers, county decision makers, community coalition leaders and members, law enforcement, farmers and agricultural sector workers, parents (through the parenting hubs), 4-H volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- C. OSU Extension Radio Programming will provide broad-reaching education to rural listeners audience; programs will include multiple formats (e.g., personal stories, expert interviews, innovative solutions) and varied mental health and substance abuse topics.
- D. County-Level Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource Guides will be developed and distributed widely within each county. Guides include comprehensively compiled information for referrals and support.
- E. Prevention Week activities will be held in each region (Coast, Forest) during the second weeks of May 2020 and 2021. Prevention Week is an annual, nationwide event to raise community awareness about mental health and substance abuse. The event will offer locally-driven educational events to highlight needs and opportunities for action and promote recovery.

## “Coast to Forest” Logic Model



A **project timeline** is built quarterly over a two-year period from September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2021. A simplified timeline is below.

<i>Coast to Forest Simple Timeline</i>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
	Sept – Nov	Dec – Feb	Mar – May	June – Aug	Sept – Nov	Dec – Feb	Mar – May	June – Aug
Project kickoff; staff onboarding	//////////							
Community Conversations	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////
Mental Health First Aid Trainings	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////		//////////	
Extension Radio Programming		//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////
Resource Guides		//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////
Prevention Week		//////////	//////////			//////////	//////////	
Evaluation data collection	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////	//////////
Project close; reporting								//////////

**An opportunity exists to scale the project** with support from additional partners. We are grateful for the financial support (~\$288,000) of the Rural Health and Safety Education Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the US Department of Agriculture to make an initial investment in four pilot counties. Special thanks to those who offered Letters of Support for the application: Adventist Health – Tillamook Regional Medical Center; Alexandra Communications – Tillamook Radio; Center for Human Development, Inc.; Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization; InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization; Lincoln County Board of Commissioners; Lincoln County Health and Human Services; North East Oregon Network; Oregon Office of Rural Health; Oregon Department of Human Services – District 13 Administration (Baker and Union Counties); Oregon Health Authority - Prescription Drug Overdose Program; Oregon Mental Health First Aid/Association of Community Mental Health Programs; Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative; Oregon State University Pesticide Safety Education Program; and, Union County Safe Communities Coalition.