

# Beyond OPIOIDS

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Our nation is in the midst of an opioid epidemic. The United States far outpaces all other countries in its opioid consumption – leading directly to more than 64,000 deaths in 2016 alone. In Minnesota, 3.5 million prescriptions were written for opioids that same year. In addition to the mounting death toll, the crisis has major social and economic impacts – on families who have lost loved ones, in lost productivity, in health care costs – all amounting to more than \$500 billion per year nationwide.<sup>i</sup>

America's opioid epidemic was caused by many factors – including heightened awareness of chronic pain, aggressive marketing of new drugs, prescription protocols, stigma around substance abuse and access to cheap opioids like heroin and fentanyl. Likewise, **finding our way beyond opioids will require a concerted, multi-faceted approach** that actively includes policymakers, the medical community, educators and media.

**Nearly half  
of all Americans  
know someone who has  
struggled with prescription  
opioid abuse, and yet  
virtually all Americans  
(93%) think it will not  
happen to them.**

Twin Cities PBS (TPT), the Association of Minnesota Public Educational Radio Stations (Ampers), and the Minnesota Public Television Association (MPTA) have joined forces to launch **Beyond Opioids**, a **\$3.1 million education and prevention initiative**. This groundbreaking project will leverage the power of media to **educate** Minnesotans about the opioid crisis; **empower** people to share stories; **prevent** opioid abuse; and **connect** people to resources for help and hope.

Building on the award-winning and proven multimedia model established by MPTA's *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam*, and Ampers' *Veterans' Voices* project, **Beyond Opioids will reach and engage communities in all 87 counties statewide. It will:**

**Educate** through powerful storytelling: *The partners will create diverse peer-to-peer audio and video testimonials by and for real people whose lives have been touched by opioids, with particular attention to Native American, African American and rural communities, all hard hit by the epidemic. The partners will also create short-form video portraits; provide context through in-depth documentary work; and offer timely policy analysis on TPT's Almanac and other platforms.*

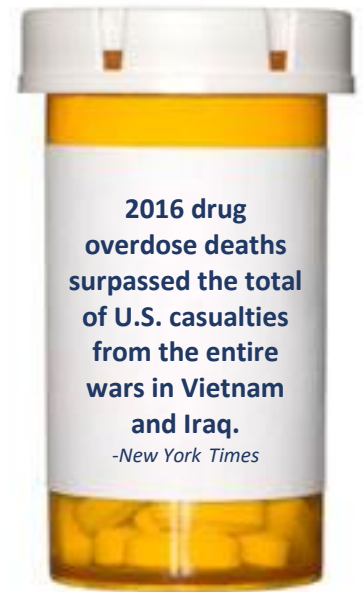
**Empower** people to share their own stories: *Central to the initiative is a custom online platform that invites the community to share personal stories in a safe space about the realities of addiction; connect with each other; access resources; and ultimately create new pathways for hope, healing and empathy.*

**Prevent** opioid abuse before it starts: *The partners will reach out to and collaborate with educators and community-based influencers to convene communities, learn together and share responses to the epidemic.*

**Connect** Minnesotans to resources for prevention and recovery: The initiative will include a high-profile, integrated **Beyond Opioids** media campaign highlighting the work of critical non-profit organizations leading the way in education, prevention and recovery services.

TPT, Ampers and the MPTA will actively work with community organizations, health providers and treatment and addiction centers that are responding to the opioid crisis in communities large and small. Importantly, TPT’s Strategic Impact Analyst will lead the partners in measuring the initiative’s impact within the focus areas of educating, empowering, preventing and connecting.

Relying upon powerful and personal storytelling, **Beyond Opioids** is more than just a sound bite-driven media campaign and more than a series of news stories. Research shows that media can play a powerful role in **raising awareness** about substance abuse and **promoting prevention** – especially when it is grounded in storytelling and peer-to-peer messaging. As the Centers for Disease Control note, story-driven media is “a powerful and effective way to raise awareness and increase knowledge about the dangers of prescription opioid use and misuse.”<sup>ii</sup> Importantly, the CDC adds, “The use of personal narratives in audio and video appears to be far more effective than other channels at motivating people to talk with others.”<sup>iii</sup>



Leveraging the power of public media and a broad collaboration of community partners, this initiative will help Minnesotans find and advance real solutions to the epidemic, prevent misuse and addiction, and break down the silence and stigma that so often keep people from seeking help. **Together, we can move beyond opioids.**

## Educate Empower Connect Prevent

A community collaboration  
TPT- Twin Cities PBS | ampers | MPTA

**State of Minnesota Leadership Request: \$1.6 million**

<sup>i</sup>Council on Economic Advisors. “The Underestimated Cost of the Opioid Crisis.” November 2017.

<sup>ii</sup>Centers for Disease Control, Addressing the Opioid Crisis (2017).

<sup>iii</sup>Ibid.



TWIN  
CITIES  
PBS

### Twin Cities PBS (TPT)

*Twin Cities PBS serves 51 counties in  
Central Minnesota.*



minnesota public television association

### Minnesota Public Television Association

*Minnesota's 6 independent public television  
stations include:*

WDSE-WRPT (Duluth)  
Lakeland Public TV (Bemidji)  
Pioneer PBS (Granite Falls)  
Prairie Public Television (Fargo-Moorhead)  
KSMQ-TV (Austin)  
TPT- Twin Cities PBS

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Diverse Radio for  
Minnesota's Communities

### Association of Minnesota Public Educational Radio Stations

*Ampers is a group of 18 community radio  
stations including:*

KAXE (Grand Rapids/Ely/Brainerd)  
KBEM (Minneapolis/St. Paul)  
KBFT (Bois Forte, Nett Lake)  
KBXE (Bemidji/Bagley)  
KFAI (Minneapolis/St. Paul)  
KKWE (White Earth/Callaway)  
KMOJ (Minneapolis/St. Paul)  
KMSU (Mankato/Austin)  
KOJB (Leech Lake/Cass Lake)  
KQAL (Winona)  
KRPR (Rochester)  
KSRQ (Thief River Falls)  
KUMD (Duluth)  
KUMM (Morris)  
KUOM (Minneapolis/St. Paul)  
KVSC (St. Cloud)  
WTIP (Grand Marais)  
WGZS (Fond du Lac/Cloquet)

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