

THE RECORDER

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Fighting addiction before it starts

Regional COG receives grant money from state

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The Franklin Regional Council of Governments was among 26 municipalities and institutions awarded \$2.9 million in grants through the Department of Public Health Monday, money the administration said is intended to combat opioid abuse before it starts.

Locally, it means continued life for the Communities that Care Coalition's efforts.

Rachel Stoler, the Council of Government's Partnership for Youth co-coordinator, said the Partnership has held a grant for the past seven years or so on behalf of the Communities that Care Coalition to address underage drinking. The money has been used for compliance checks and social marketing and social norms campaigns, and teacher trainings in the Botvin LifeSkills curriculum to prevent youth substance abuse and violence.

That funding, through the DPH Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, was ending Stoler's aid, when the new, similar grant came along.

"The emphasis is still on underage drinking but also on other drugs," Stoler said.

The grant specifically lists 12 Franklin County towns, but Stoler said it will be implemented county-wide. What that will mean remains to be decided.

The Communities that Care Coalition is getting ready to begin its five-year plan and will spend six months or so looking at old and new data from its teen health surveys and looking for emerging issues or areas in which prevention efforts have not succeeded.

"We may end up with the same strategies or a whole new set of strategies," she said.

The grant is for three years, with the possibility of two two-year extensions. Stoler said the hope is that the \$100,000 is the annual figure.