

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



The **Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Family and Community Health (FCH) Program** and the **OSU Center for Health Innovation** are introducing a new collaboration project, *From Coast to Forest: Building on Community Strengths to Promote Mental Health and Reduce Opioid Abuse in Rural Oregon* (Coast to Forest). This two-year grant (2020-2022) is funded through the Rural Health and Safety Education program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the US Department of Agriculture. Project activities will take place in Tillamook, Lincoln, Baker and Union Counties in Oregon.

The Coast to Forest initiative will build upon existing, underleveraged state and community strengths and resources to address gaps in educational, preventive and systems-level approaches to the current opioid and mental health crisis. The strengths include:

- A growing network of Community Health Workers (CHW) being trained through the OSU Center for Health Innovation at the College of Public Health and Human Sciences,
- An expanding Mental Health First Aid network that will benefit from additional trainers and training opportunities in rural communities;
- Community-level partnerships that are poised to incorporate mental health and substance abuse prevention more centrally into their work; and
- Radio stations enthusiastic about collaborating with the Coast to Forest Project staff on monthly programming relevant to their communities' health and wellness.

Coast to Forest Goals:

- Reduce opioid misuse and abuse and their underlying causes and consequences.
- Improve mental health and well-being in four rural/frontier Oregon counties: Lincoln, Tillamook, Baker, and Union.

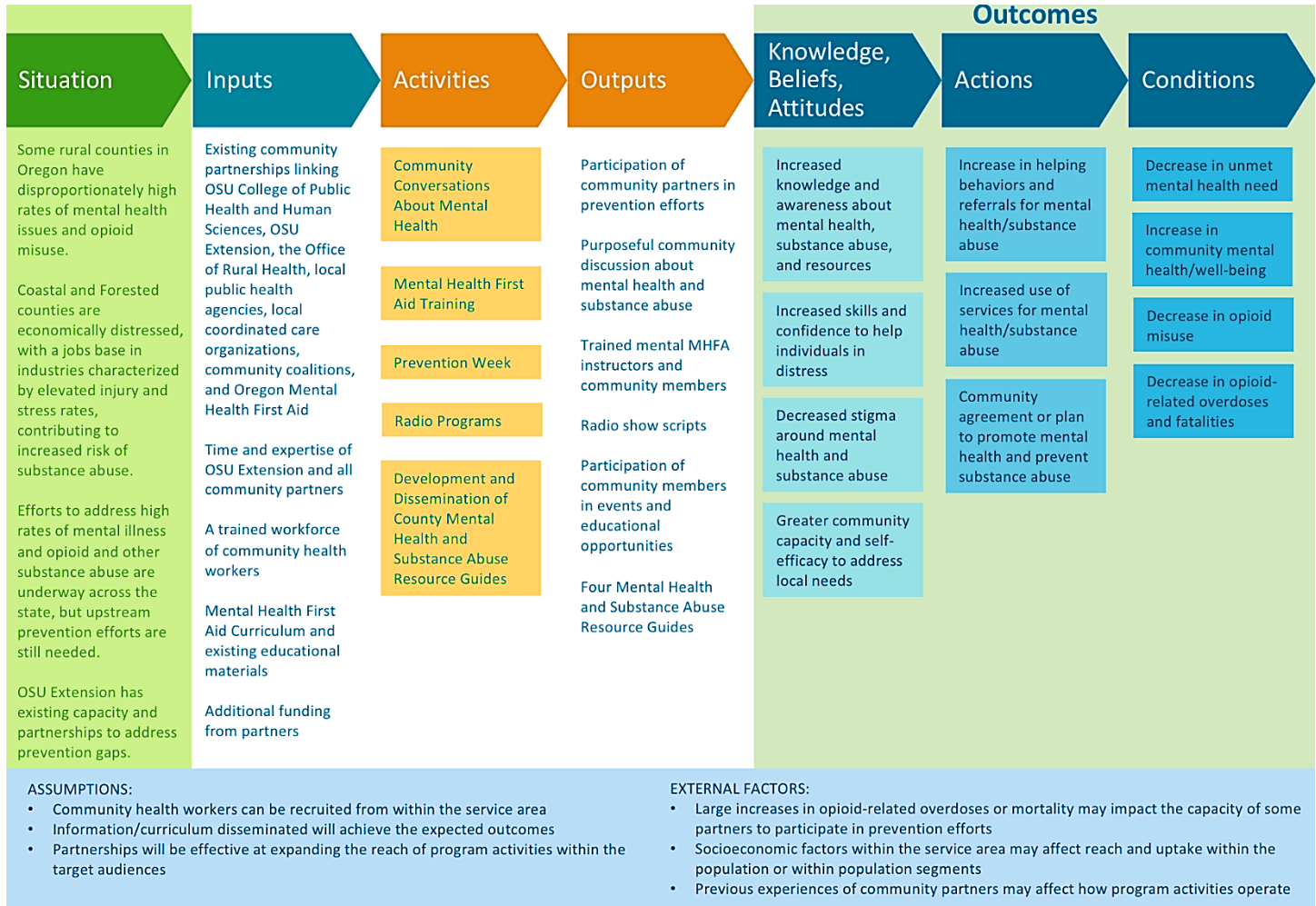
Outcome objectives:

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

Evidence-based project activities:

- **Community Conversations about Mental Health** will leverage existing partnerships to facilitate strategic conversations and planning through a series of 4 conversations to share experiences, discuss challenges, and find community solutions.
- **Mental Health First Aid Training** will be delivered in the four counties. Anticipated participants include social service and healthcare providers, county decision makers, community coalition members, law enforcement, agricultural sector workers, parents, and 4-H volunteers.
- **OSU Extension Radio Programming** will provide broad-reaching education to rural listeners' audience; programs will include multiple formats (e.g., personal stories, expert interviews, and innovative solutions) and varied mental health and substance abuse topics.
- **County-Level Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource Guides** that include information for referral and support will be developed and distributed widely within each county.
- **Prevention Week** activities will be held in all four counties in collaboration with partners to highlight needs and opportunities for action and to promote recovery. Prevention Week is an annual, nationwide event to raise community awareness about mental health and substance abuse.

Coast to Forest Logic Model



For information visit:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/coast-forest-mental-health-promotion-rural-oregon>

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