

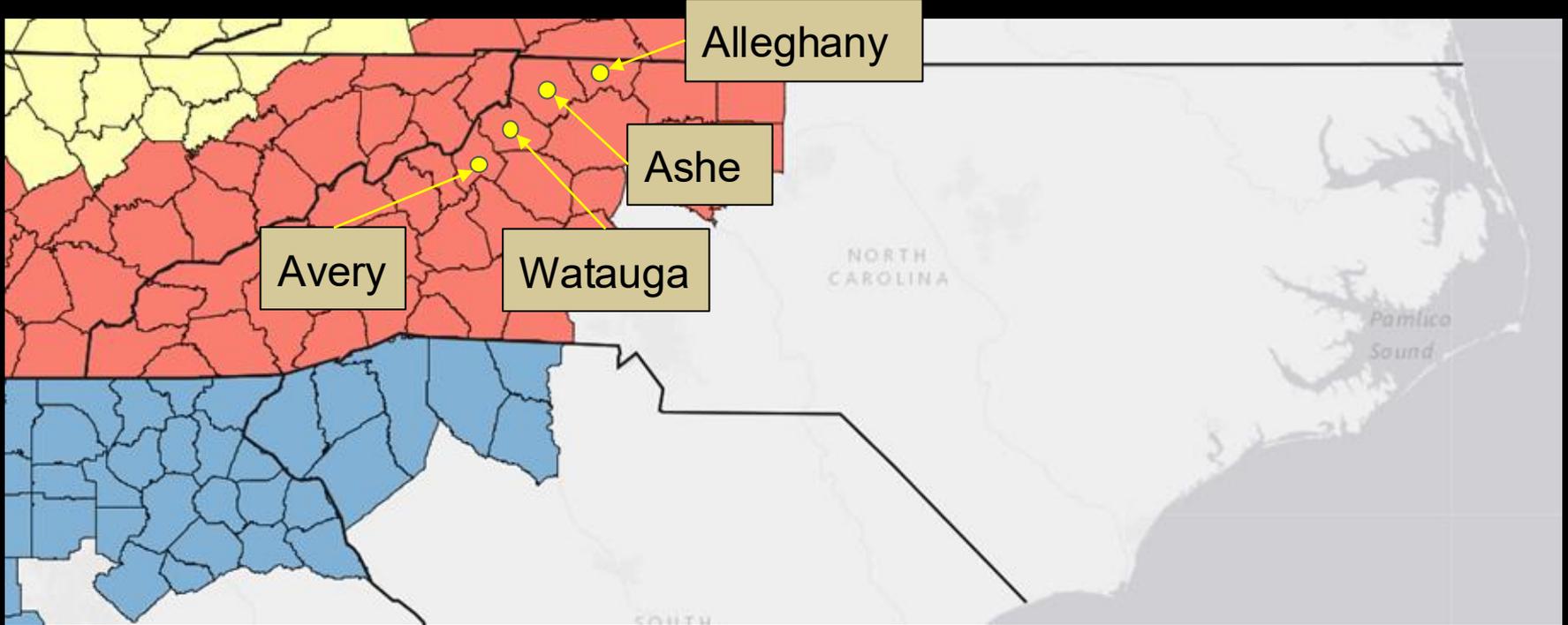
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# “Understanding and Addressing Opioid Remediation Activities in Four Appalachian Counties in Western North Carolina”

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# Regional Context



Source: Screenshot of map from the Appalachian Regional Commission

# Regional Context

	Poor Mental Health Days (per 30 days)	Frequent Mental Distress	Feelings of Loneliness	Primary Care Physicians	Mental Health Providers	Other Primary Care Providers	Food Insecurity	Uninsured Adults	Severe Housing Problems	Severe Housing Cost Burden	Lack of Social and Emotional Support
Alleghany	5.5 [4.4-6.7]	<b>20% [18%-22%]</b>	32% [27-38%]	1,000:1	<b>440:1</b>	<b>1,620:1</b>	18%	<b>20% [17%-24%]</b>	13% [9%-17%]	11% [8%-14%]	23% [19%-27%]
Ashe	5.3 [4.2-6.4]	18% [16%-20%]	32% [27-37%]	<b>2,050:1</b>	<b>560:1</b>	<b>900:1</b>	16%	16% [13%-18%]	9% [7%-11%]	9% [7%-12%]	21% [18-25%]
Avery	5.2 [4.2-6.4]	18% [16%-20%]	31% [27-36%]	<b>4,470:1</b>	210:1	<b>1,600:1</b>	15%	<b>18% [15%-21%]</b>	11% [8%-13%]	8% [5%-11%]	22% [19%-25%]
Watauga	5.2 [4.1-6.3]	17% [15%-19%]	32% [27%-37%]	1,260:1	190:1	620:1	15%	13% [11%-16%]	<b>21% [18%-24%]</b>	<b>23% [20%-27%]</b>	22% [19%-25%]
NC	4.9	16%	31%	1,410:1	300:1	580:1	14%	14%	14%	13%	23%
United States	5.1	16%	33%	1,330:1	300:1	710:1	14%	11%	17%	15%	25%

## Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to learn directly from people with lived and living experiences with opioid use to inform treatment and recovery practices and policies implemented by local policymakers, practitioners, and researchers

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# AppHealthCare

Caring for our Community



## The Partners



**BEAVER COLLEGE OF  
HEALTH SCIENCES**



- Appalachian District Health Department and FQHC serving Alleghany, Ashe, and Watauga counties
  - Primary care, immunizations, sexual health, behavioral health and recovery support, dental, WIC, environmental health...
- Supporting all three counties around Opioid Settlement funds
  - Partners engaged in strategic planning identified **need for better data** within the district to inform funding decisions
  - Provides an avenue to **include lived and living experiences** in decision-making process without undue risk of safety or discomfort

- App State Team: Adam Hege (PI), Martie Thompson (Co-PI), & Co-investigators: Annie Preaux, Ben Alexander-Eitzman, Christine Quattro, & Maggie Sugg
- Our Role:
  - Conducting interviews
  - Developing (with feedback) and implementing surveys
  - Data analysis and dissemination to partners
  - Listening!



# A mixed methods approach

## In-depth interviews

May-August 2025

Conducted 21 interviews with current and former opioid users in 3 counties (Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga)

Early life experiences, substance use history, experiences with treatment services and harm reduction strategies, current life situation, including social vulnerability, motivations and advice for others

## Survey

Planned for Fall 2025

Aiming for responses from 100 current and former opioid users in 4 counties

Survey tools and items informed by the interviews and predefined constructs from behavioral theories such as Health Belief Model, Stages of Change and Social Ecological Model

# Preliminary Findings and Next Steps

## Preliminary Themes

- Recovery and polysubstance use

***“To be honest with you, it was not hard. It wasn’t hard at all because I started doing meth, and then you just focus on that, and you know, everything else don’t really matter. I don’t drink beer no more.”***

***- Man in Alleghany county***

# Preliminary Findings and Next Steps

## Preliminary Themes

- Recovery and polysubstance use

***“The way I got off of pills was because I lost my job, and I lost my insurance, and I couldn’t afford to buy them...I just upped my meth use a lot. Really true and honestly, I would probably still do opiates if they were available to me...I can’t afford it. I had to pick one.”***

***- Woman in Watauga county***

# Preliminary Findings and Next Steps

## Preliminary Themes

- Looking for connection in health services

***“I would like to have had time to, like, sit down and have somebody that actually genuinely [cares], I mean, you know, they ain’t just doing it just for a paycheck, that really does care.”***

- Man in Alleghany county

# Preliminary Findings and Next Steps

## Preliminary Themes

- (Lack of) Social Support and Isolation

***“Sometimes I have to block out the whole world, you know? You know, to stay away from people, and that’s what I’ll do.”***

-Man in Alleghany county

Spending on Strategies (2023- 2025)	Alleghany	Ashe	Avery	Watauga
1. Collaborative Strategic Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Evidence-Based Addiction Treatment	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Recovery Support Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Recovery Housing Support		✓		✓
5. Employment-related services				
6. Early Intervention		✓	✓	✓
7. Naloxone Distribution	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Post-Overdose Response Team	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. Syringe Services Program	✓	✓		✓
10. Criminal Justice Diversion Programs				
11. Addiction Treatment for Incarcerated Persons	✓	✓		
12. Reentry Programs			✓	✓

Survey results will help us compare the services utilized by community members to the services funded by settlement dollars

We also plan to ask community members about the services they aren't using and *why*. We can also examine associations between other survey constructs and the use of specific services

Thank you!

