

Jinhee Kim, Ph.D., Ghaffar Ali Hurtado, Ph.D. Juliana Muñoz B., M.A., Suzanne Randolph, Ph.D., Laura Bonilla  
University of Maryland

## Introduction

- The opioid epidemic disproportionately affects rural areas in the US.
- Extension programs can be used to increase the capacity in rural communities to address the opioid epidemic.
- A needs assessment was conducted to secure a federal grant and form a partnership to increase opioid-related prevention and service capacity in rural communities in Maryland through Extension services.

## Methods

- We developed and distributed an online survey to Extension faculty/staff to determine assets in rural areas, identify needs for missing services/programs, and identify partners for a collaborative effort to address the opioid epidemic.
- The online survey (30 close- and open-ended items sent via email) was completed by 88 of 252 Extension faculty/staff (35%).
- Data were analyzed by frequency for close-ended response options.

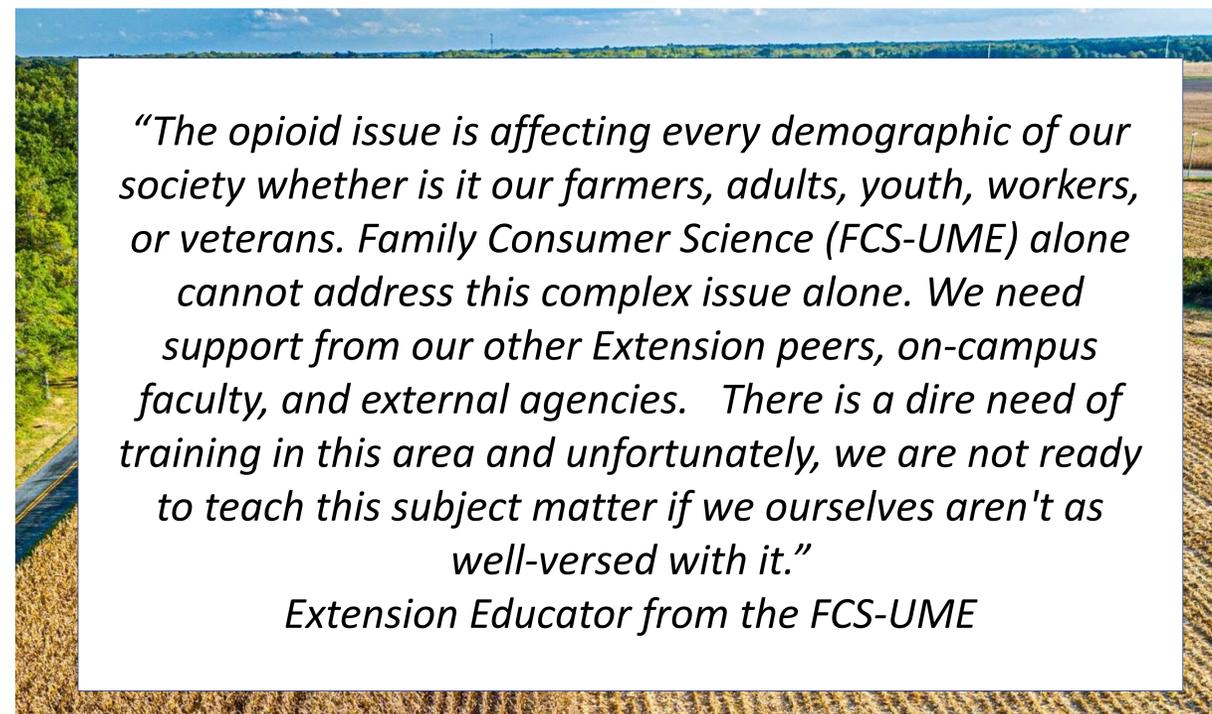
## Results

Two main needs were identified:

- 1) UME needs to collaborate with agencies/ organizations that are already working on rural opioid response. Participants highlighted several organizations and programs that are already being implemented.
- 2) There is a need for training on evidence-based interventions (EBI) involving opioid-related prevention or service.
  - Participants highlighted they wanted training in the following topics:
    - Community capacity building and engagement (29% )
    - Working with vulnerable populations (20%)
    - Strengthening family program (18%)
    - Mental health first aid (13%).
  - 53% of respondents are not currently involved in programs related to substance abuse.

## Responding to the Opioid Epidemic through MarylandROTA

- Through a SAMHSA sponsored grant, University of Maryland Extension (UME), in partnership with local and state collaborators created a program to develop and disseminate training and technical assistance for rural communities on addressing opioid issues affecting rural communities in Maryland.
- The multi-prong approach includes 1) Mental Health First Aid training, 2) Opioid prevention and treatment education and 3) LifeSkills education programs for youth.



## MarylandROTA Goals

- To leverage the existing University of Maryland Extension (UME) programs and system to **enhance the capacity of the community to help identify, understand, and respond** to the opioid epidemic.
- To **serve populations in rural communities** throughout Maryland to **increase public awareness, understanding, and skills** to respond to opioid use and decrease overdoses and deaths.

## Discussion

Lessons learned in using community assessments to leverage limited resources for research and prevention through Extension programs should be of interest to a wide audience as many states with growing rural epidemics also have Extension scientists and educators.

## Importance to Public Health

This poster has implications for others interested in implementing collaborations in rural areas to provide opioid-related prevention/services for diverse populations.



Visit our website for events, webinars and relevant information at **MarylandROTA.org**  
Email us at **MarylandROTA@umd.edu**

## Sample questions included:

- *Please share with us on which of the following topics you are interested in receiving training on (select all that apply) ;*
- *Please tell us which of the following state agencies you work with (select all that apply)*
- *Is there anything else you would like to add about opioid issues in the community or Extension's opioid responses? (Open ended)*