

## **Fletcher Group Secures \$6.6 Million Federal Grant To Combat Opioid Epidemic**

STOCKBRIDGE, GEORGIA -- The Fletcher Group has been awarded a \$6.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As part of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP), the grant will support evidence-based efforts to prevent and treat Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) in rural communities.

“We’re extremely honored,” said Fletcher Group Founder Ernie Fletcher. “This grant provides the resources to expand the full spectrum of evidenced-based Recovery Housing, including the highly successful Recovery Kentucky model, across rural America.”

Recovery Kentucky was founded in 2004 by Don Ball and then Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher and is well-known for helping thousands of Kentuckians rebuild their lives while saving millions of taxpayer dollars.

Fletcher Group CEO Dave Johnson said the funds will help establish a Recovery Center of Excellence (RCOE) from which technical assistance can be shared with communities and organizations fighting the opioid epidemic.

“The Don Ball Rural Center of Excellence for Recovery Housing,” said Johnson, “will help communities and organizations develop Recovery Housing for high-risk individuals including the homeless and those with SUDs involved in the criminal justice system.”

The Fletcher Group’s RCOE will have a national reach, serving over 100 counties and 2.6 million people in eight states including Kentucky, Georgia, West Virginia, Ohio, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

### **Fulfilling RCORP’s Mission**

The Fletcher Group is one of three organizations chosen to receive the HHS grant of \$6.6 million over the next three years. The other recipients are the University of Vermont and the University of Rochester, New York. Alone among the three, the Fletcher Group RCOE features a strong focus on Recovery Housing.

According to a 2018 GAO report, the Recovery Housing industry is unregulated and fraught with fraud, ineffectiveness and, occasionally, client abuse. While quality and effectiveness vary greatly, consumers have little information with which to choose providers. As a result, families often spend thousands of dollars with little result as loved ones continue to suffer from the results of Substance Use and Opioid Use Disorders. Unfortunately, Recovery Housing is limited in

rural communities, in large part because of a lack of resources and technical assistance.

### **A Team Effort**

The Fletcher Group is a uniquely purpose-driven and agile organization that leverages a wide range of partners. The company's RCOE evaluation team will draw on the expertise of the University of Kentucky College of Public Health and Kentucky Injury Prevention Research Center (KIPRC) as well as JBA, a leading program evaluation organization with over 40 years of multi-state experience.

Other partners will include the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

An additional key role will be played by the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (FAHE), a financial intermediary with expertise in low-income housing tax credits, section-8 housing, and other financial resources needed to fund Recovery Housing.

### **Boots On The Ground**

The Fletcher Group's expertise in prevention, intervention, Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), and Recovery Housing will be promoted locally by Outreach and Engagement Specialists residing in each region. To lower overdose fatalities, provide alternatives to jail for drug offenders, reduce recidivism, and promote health and well-being, the Specialists will identify needs and assist in tailoring the response most appropriate to each community.

For more information, visit [www.fletchergroup.org](http://www.fletchergroup.org) or contact Fletcher Group Communications Director Richard Faylor at 208-713-4002 / [rfaylor@fletchergroup.org](mailto:rfaylor@fletchergroup.org).

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