



## Southeast Health District

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Jeff Davis County Board of Health announce the Jeff Davis Substance Abuse Coalition (JDSAC)**

The Jeff Davis County Board of Health has received grant funding from “Rural Health Network Development Planning Program.” The purpose of the Network Planning program is to assist in the development of an integrated healthcare network, for specifically network participants who do not have a history of formal collaborative efforts. As the lead applicant, the Jeff Davis Health Department received a \$130,000 grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which represents 77% of the total cost of the project. An additional \$30,237, representing 23% of project costs, were contributed from local non-federal sources. This grant will pioneer a powerful and much-needed initiative for its county residents – the Jeff Davis Substance Abuse Coalition (JDSAC).

The coalition kicked off its efforts with its first formative meeting on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Hazlehurst Public Library. Dr. Rosemarie D. Parks addressed the Opioid and Addictive Disease Crisis in the state of Georgia and announced the new initiative during her presentation to the Board of Health. The Board of Health is looking forward to a productive year of partnership building and mission development. Mrs. Cara Taylor, Nurse Manager of the Jeff Davis County Health Department, will serve as the coalition’s project director and Shan Choudhri was hired to coordinate the project activities.

There is a significant need in Jeff Davis County for a community-led effort in tackling substance abuse and addiction. The rate of drug related emergency room visits in Jeff Davis County is among one of the highest of the 16 counties comprising the Southeast Health District. The county also has the highest mortality rate due to drug overdose for the last five years compared to the rest of the district. Jeff Davis County has a severe shortage of healthcare providers and behavioral health resources which makes it difficult for residents to address the concerns of substance abuse. These challenges take a significant toll on individuals, families, businesses, and the community as a whole.

The JDSAC will use a multidimensional approach in its fight against the substance abuse crisis. Thus far, JDSAC has partnered with healthcare providers, behavioral health professionals, public health representatives, law enforcement officers, chamber of commerce representatives, nonprofit representatives, human services representatives, and educators, all of whom will contribute uniquely to the coalition’s efforts. The JDSAC is seeking to educate healthcare providers about the crisis, raise awareness in the community at large, identify resources for treatment and support the efforts to decrease the availability of addictive substances, among other goals aimed at improving health outcomes in the county.

The next planned JDSAC meeting is scheduled for 12:00 noon on October 24 at the Jeff Davis County Public Library. New information and coalition updates will be disseminated regularly through the JDSAC’s Facebook page: [facebook.com/JeffDavisSAC](https://facebook.com/JeffDavisSAC). Additionally, if you believe that you or your organization can make a positive impact within the JDSAC and would like to become a coalition partner, please feel free to send a message to the coalition’s Facebook page or email Shan Choudhri, the project coordinator, at [choudhri@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:choudhri@sas.upenn.edu).