



June 17, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Sioux Empire Coalition (SEC), managed by Health Connect of South Dakota, I am writing to express SEC's strong and continued support for the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. The SEC membership is deeply concerned by the proposed \$100 million reduction to the HIDTA program and the shift in oversight from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to the Department of Justice (DOJ), as outlined in the White House's recent budget proposal.

Over the years, Midwest HIDTA has served as an essential partner in South Dakota's fight against the overdose crisis. Through cross-sector collaboration, innovative programs, and data sharing tools such as the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP), Midwest HIDTA has effectively bridged the gap between public health and public safety. These coordinated efforts have allowed us to respond quickly to overdose outbreaks, allocate resources more effectively, and support evidence-based strategies for prevention, intervention, and recovery.

The unique placement of HIDTA under ONDCP has enabled the program to operate as a neutral convener across federal, state, and local agencies. This structure is critical for maintaining a balanced approach that values both enforcement and public health. A move to DOJ may unintentionally shift the focus away from this vital integration, limiting the public health impact that HIDTA has worked so hard to cultivate.

A significant reduction in funding would jeopardize many of the collaborative programs currently in place, including real-time data collection, overdose response coordination, and the multi-agency task forces that address the social and behavioral health needs associated with substance use. In a time when overdose deaths remain unacceptably high, it is essential that we strengthen — not weaken — the programs that have demonstrated effectiveness through collaboration, innovation, and results.

The SEC and Health Connect of South Dakota strongly urge continued investment in the HIDTA program and support maintaining its placement within ONDCP to preserve its vital role as a strategic, balanced, and multi-disciplinary tool in the national response to drug trafficking and substance use.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frances Rice".

Frances Rice
Executive Director

Our Mission:

Health Connect serves all South Dakotans with health promotion resources to make better health choices and to live an addiction-free health-enriched life.

PO BOX 1772 • SIOUX FALLS, SD 57101-1772
(605) 371-1000 • 1-888-761-5437 • www.healthconnectsd.org