

Dear ,

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Regional Health Operations (ORHO) understands the complex challenges faced by communities grappling with HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs, and substance use disorders. To address these critical issues, we have partnered with The MayaTech Corporation, aiming to deeply understand and effectively respond to these health concerns, especially in rural areas across the United States.

Our focus is on gathering the insights of those directly impacted - providers and individuals with lived experience - to identify barriers and facilitators in implementing effective harm reduction strategies. To this end, we are seeking your partnership to identify individuals and providers who can contribute significantly to our virtual focus groups. These discussions are crucial in shaping ORHO's approach to addressing substance use disorders, and your participation will play a key role in helping to advance this effort.

Focus group participants will receive a consultant fee as a token of appreciation for sharing their experiences and perspectives on receiving and providing harm reduction services.

The MayaTech Corporation, with over 38 years of experience in public health research, is a minority-owned business that specializes in advancing public health through research, programming, and strategic support services. Our diverse team is committed to promoting health equity and innovating public health practices.

We are eager to collaborate with you in this important endeavor. If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We recognize the value of your time and insights and thank you in advance for considering this opportunity to make a significant impact on public health.

Sincerely,

## **FAQs for those considering participation:**

### **1. What is the purpose of this focus group?**

- **Answer:** The focus group aims to gather insights and perspectives on harm reduction strategies related to HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs, and substance use disorders. The experiences and opinions of providers and those with lived experience will help us better understand the challenges implementing and accessing harm reduction services and facilitate the development of more effective interventions in rural communities.

### **2. Who is eligible to participate in the focus group?**

- **Answer:** We are looking for individuals who are 18 years or older, have experience with injection drug use, and/or have experienced an overdose, as well as providers who service these individuals. Participants should have access to a device (like a cell phone or computer) and a private space for participating in a virtual focus group.

### **3. How long will the focus group session last?**

- **Answer:** The focus group session is expected to last approximately 90 minutes [45 minutes for provider groups]. We have designed the session to be as concise and informative as possible.

### **4. Will my participation be confidential?**

- **Answer:** Yes, your participation and the information you share will be kept confidential. We adhere to strict privacy policies to protect your identity and the information you provide during the focus group.

### **5. Will I be compensated for my time?**

- **Answer:** Yes, participants will receive a consultant fee as a token of appreciation for their valuable time and insights. The details of the compensation will be provided upon your confirmation of participation.

### **6. What will happen to the information I provide?**

- **Answer:** The information gathered from the focus group will be used to inform research and development of harm reduction strategies. Your insights are crucial in shaping policies and practices to better address substance use disorders and associated health issues.

### **7. How can I sign up to participate?**

- **Answer:** If you are interested in participating, please contact us at [provide contact information]. We will provide you with more details and guide you through the next steps, including a brief screening process and scheduling.

### **8. What if I have more questions before deciding to participate?**

- **Answer:** We welcome any questions or concerns you might have. Feel free to reach out to us at [provide contact information], and we'll be happy to provide you with all the information you need to make an informed decision.