

# Battling the Challenges of Drug Disposal in Rural Texas

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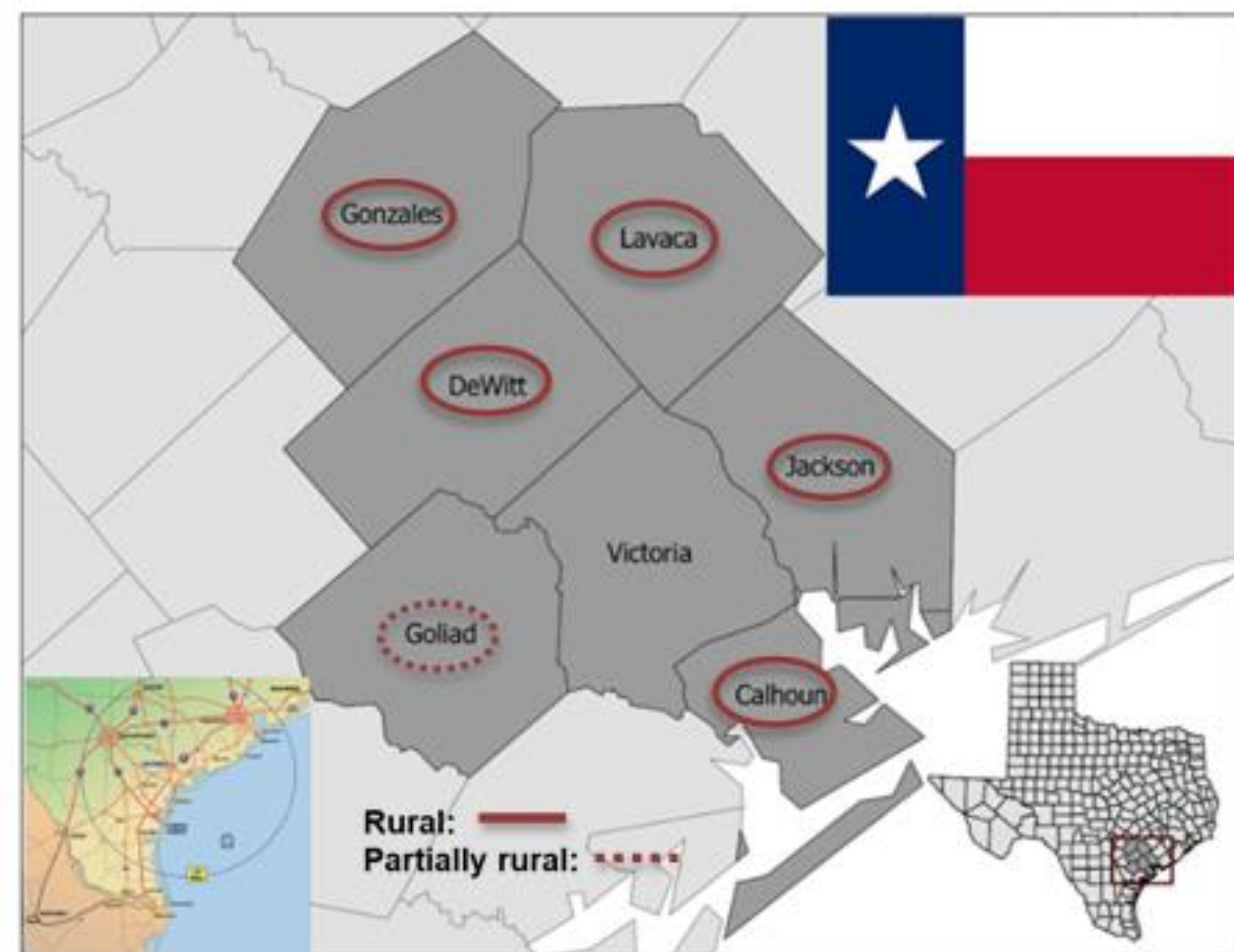
## Purpose:

Explore the challenges of safe drug disposal methods in the voices of the Golden Crescent community in the Coast Bend of Texas (Figure 1) while considering best practices from literature.

## Background:

From 2019-2020, Texas A&M University College of Nursing led a team in a Rural Community Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Planning grant funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Figure 1: Map of Golden Crescent Counties in Texas



## Description:

Community assessment included interviews and discussions with over 100 stakeholders to assess available substance use disorder (SUD) / opioid use disorder (OUD) services to include safe medication disposal.

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- Stories of going into homes where medications are (including prescription opioids) on dining room tables and or kitchen counters reported.
- "Did have a drug take back at the county sheriff's office, but it was not well utilized"
- "Also, some big metal mailbox looking items were placed in some rural hospital parking lots... concern over vandalism of the bins"
- "I think it would be helpful to have more disposable for narcotics and things because there's really no place to get rid of it... logistically people can't get here."

### Major Challenges found in the planning process:

- Providing SUD/OUD services
- Accessing SUD/OUD services
- Stigma related to SUD/OUD
- Lack of adequate resources
- **March 2020: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic**



### TEAM STRATEGY to address challenges:

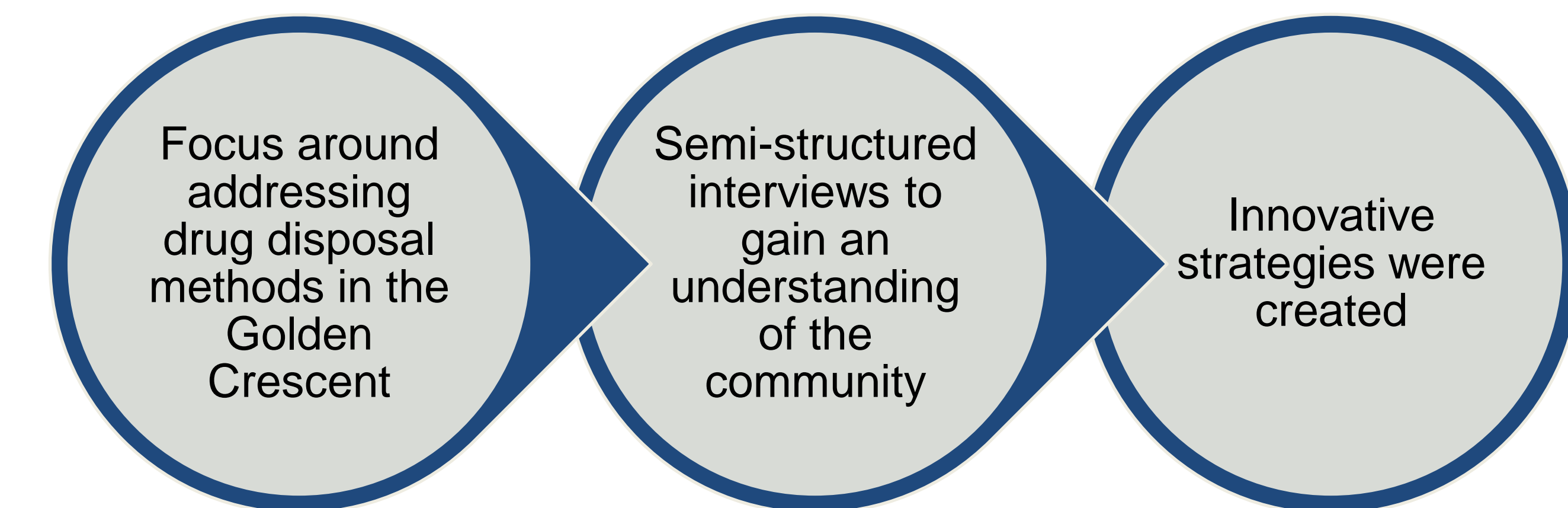
- A resilient and engaged community consortium proceeded forward with building the **Golden Crescent ROSC** to address major challenges.

## Results:

The Golden Crescent Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) was established from the growing consortium network of clinical and non-clinical services and support to reduce SUD/OUD morbidity and mortality among the community. A community tailored plan of activities was formulated, including safe medication/drug disposal strategies.

Submission and subsequent funding of two RCORP grants are founded on the Golden Crescent ROSC in implement uniquely tailored plan by the community, for the community that includes exploration of safe drug disposal for the Golden Crescent. Current literature was used to consider:

- Innovative strategies for a community-focused solution
- Focus on existing community strengths and resources



## Conclusion:

Working with the ROSC, current plans are in place for collaboration with local pharmacies. We are in process of assessment of drug disposal practices, pharmacy training programs, community education needs, and feasibility of single use drug disposal pouches within the community.

## References:

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Petrik, M. L., McNamara, P. J., Moeschler, S. M., & Blair, B. D. (2019). Communication of recommendations for the disposal of unused prescription opioid medications by stakeholders in the news media. *Pain Medicine*, 20(9), 1711-1716.