

One Wisconsin Now: Will party loyalty trump common sense for Gov. Walker and AG Schimel on opioid addiction crisis?

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Walker and Schimel Owe Wisconsin Answers

MADISON, Wis. — National experts tasked with offering solutions to the opioid addiction crisis recommended declaring a national emergency to help more resources be directed to treatment and to equip local emergency responders with anti-overdose medication. Meanwhile in comments to the media [Donald Trump responded](#) with a call for a “lock ‘em up” strategy and opined addiction could be prevented by simply telling people to not start using drugs.

One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross asked if Gov. Scott Walker and Attorney General Brad Schimel, who have made high profile promises to combat the opioid addiction crisis in Wisconsin, will follow the advice of experts or stand by fellow Republican Trump and his agenda.

“Scott Walker and Brad Schimel have let their partisan political loyalty trump common sense and decency time and again when it comes to Donald Trump. So will they follow the leader of the Republican Party or take the advice of experts to combat opioid addiction?” asked Ross.

During the Republicans’ recent Affordable Care Act repeal debacle, Walker endorsed measures that would repeal requirements to include treatment for drug and alcohol addiction in health insurance policies. Out of political considerations, Walker has also steadfastly refused additional federal resources to help expand insurance coverage in Wisconsin and therefore expand access to addiction treatment.

An increasing number of states, represented by their Attorneys General, and local governments are taking legal action to hold the manufacturers of opioids accountable for their part in the addiction crisis. Most recently New Hampshire filed suit and, [according to media reports](#), “ ... claimed that Purdue Pharma significantly downplayed the risk of addiction posed by OxyContin and engaged in marketing practices that ‘opened the floodgates’ to opioid use and abuse.”

For his part, after proclaiming that combating opioid addiction would be a top priority if elected during his 2014 campaign, as Attorney Brad Schimel has taken no legal action to crack down on the tactics of the producers of prescription opioids. [In a 2016 newspaper story](#) in which the issue of legal action against opioid manufacturers was raised, Schimel demurred, claiming pharmaceutical manufacturers’ unsavory marketing practices were too far in the past.

Ross concluded, “Scott Walker and Brad Schimel have both spent plenty of time talking about how they’ll fight the opioid addiction crisis. Now they owe us answers now about where they’ll put their priorities, behind their their political self interest or before the health of Wisconsinites.”

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One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.