

Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Preventing opioid abuse through community partnerships

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The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has awarded a total of \$496,516 in grants to 63 community groups to support seven strategies to prevent opioid abuse.

“These grants further our commitment to reduce the impact of opioid abuse in Wisconsin communities,” said Paul Krupski, DHS Director of Opioid Initiatives. “The efforts supported by these grants will protect and promote the health and safety of Wisconsin residents.”

The seven strategies include:

The promotion of the Dose of Reality campaign to warn about the dangers of misusing prescription painkillers and highlight the importance of safe use, storage, and disposal of medications.

Community drug take-back events in partnership with local law enforcement to collect and safely dispose of unneeded and expired medications.

Permanent prescription drug drop boxes at pharmacies and police stations for the public to safely dispose of unneeded and expired medications.

Pouches for individuals to deactivate unneeded and expired prescription drugs and safely dispose of them in their household trash.

Lock boxes and bags for individuals to secure their medications at home.

Town hall meetings and community education events to raise awareness of the risk

of addiction associated with opioids and the risk of overdose associated with using opioids in ways other than prescribed.

A partnership with the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin to provide naloxone, the drug that reverses effects of an opioid overdose, to local first responders and community members and training on how to use it.

View the list of grant recipients and the strategies to be implemented by each group. All of the groups are members of the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth, an organization of community-based coalitions focused on preventing substance abuse among all ages.

These projects are funded through the federal State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded to DHS last year. Since May 2017, DHS has used this grant to fund new regional treatment programs in underserved areas, unmet treatment needs in 16 counties and three tribes, and a network of certified peer specialists and recovery coaches managed by Wisconsin Voices for Recovery who will work with hospital emergency room staff and other health care professionals to help patients who overdosed on opioids find a path to treatment.