

# Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Wisconsin awarded nearly \$24 million to fight opioid epidemic

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The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced this week the state has been awarded a two-year federal grant totaling nearly \$24 million to support a comprehensive response to [Wisconsin's opioid crisis](#). The funding is part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) State Opioid Response grant program.

"We will use this funding to advance our ongoing efforts to provide hope, health, and healing to communities and families in all regions of the state," said DHS Deputy Secretary Tom Engels. "This funding will help sustain and enhance critical prevention, treatment, and recovery programs to save Wisconsin lives."

Wisconsin's annual allocation of \$11,979,333 will be used to support projects backed by the Governor's Task Force on Opioid Abuse, reduce the nonmedical use of opioids, reduce opioid overdose related deaths, and expand medication-assisted treatment. Many of these efforts will also be expanded to include more high-need communities.

This funding builds on the efforts the state has already taken to fight the opioid epidemic. Governor Scott Walker created [the Governor's Task Force on Opioid Abuse\(link is external\)](#) which is co-chaired by Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and

Representative John Nygren, and issued executive orders based on recommendations, including the creation of the Commission on Substance Abuse Treatment Delivery to study the “hub-and-spoke” opioid treatment model.

To date, Governor Walker has signed into law 30 pieces of legislation under the HOPE agenda, all related to prevention, treatment and recovery to combat the opioid crisis and help save lives. In 2017, 916 people died in Wisconsin of opioid overdose caused by prescription drugs or heroin, or both, compared to 827 in 2016. There were 701 deaths involving prescription opioids in 2017, compared to 568 in 2016. Heroin-related deaths were up in 2017 to 407, compared to 371 in 2016.