

Dept. of Health Services: La Crosse Lighthouse Peer-Run respite opens

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Wisconsin's sixth peer-run respite funded by the Department of Health Services (DHS)—the La Crosse Lighthouse—is now open. It offers a place where people with mental health and substance use challenges can stay in times of increased stress or symptoms and receive support from people who have themselves been mental health and substance use service users.

“Making sure folks have the mental health and treatment services they need is an essential part of addressing substance use in our state,” said Governor Tony Evers. “Growing the state’s network of peer-run respites is a critically important part of that effort as peer-to-peer connection can help folks address trauma, receive the support they need, and ensure they get on the road to recovery.”

Established in Wisconsin in 2015, peer-run respites prevent people from experiencing traumatic mental health and substance use crisis situations and costly hospitalizations. During a free stay, guests benefit from one-on-one and group peer support and activities focused on the eight dimensions of wellness guidance from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: emotional, financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual, and environmental. There are no required activities for guests. They are free to come and go during their stay for doctor and therapy appointments, school, work, family, and other responsibilities. In many cases, guests also get connected to community resources designed to support their wellness after their stay.

“The supports offered at a peer-run respite center make it easier for people to navigate the challenges in their lives,” said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. “These centers connect people with similar experiences and examples of successful recovery to one another, inspiring hope that people experiencing

mental health and substance use concerns can and do recover.”

La Crosse Lighthouse has space for four people who can stay up to seven days each. All check-ins are voluntary self-referrals. Guests must call 608-519-1489 to arrange a stay. Check-ins are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

La Crosse Lighthouse and four other peer-run respites funded by DHS are open to all state residents. The other four peer-run respites are Iris Place in Appleton, Monarch House in Menomonie, Parachute House in Milwaukee, and Solstice House in Madison. Another DHS-funded peer-run respite—The R&R House in Pewaukee—serves veterans only.

All six DHS funded peer-run respites also provide emotional support over the phone to people who simply need to talk with someone.

Visit the [peer-run respite page](#) on the DHS website for the contact information for Wisconsin’s peer-run respites.