

# Washington County Exec. Schoemann: Thanks Governor Evers as historic opioid settlement bill signed into law

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**West Bend, WI** – County Executive Josh Schoemann joins 10 other Wisconsin County Executives today in thanking Governor Tony Evers for his signature on a bill (Assembly Bill 374) that paves the way for millions in opioid settlement funds for Washington County for abatement and mitigation efforts.

The following statement has been released by Wisconsin county executives:

“The opioid epidemic has affected every part of our great state. Counties have seen what opioid abuse has done to our families and to our communities. This scourge has manifested itself in increased demand in law enforcement, child welfare, and behavioral health. Today’s signing of AB 374 by Governor Evers will have a profound impact on services for those individuals and families so deeply affected by opioid use.

“For over four years, Wisconsin counties have been leaders in the national opioid litigation effort. We have worked tirelessly to hold those responsible for creating and perpetuating one of the most devastating epidemics in our nation’s history. With the signature by Governor Evers of AB 374 today, counties are now poised to finally bring relief to the people of Wisconsin.

“We have spoken with national experts and others closely involved in this litigation, and this bill, signed by Governor Evers, is model legislation for states and for county governments across the nation. We are so proud to lead the effort in finding

solutions for our communities that have been ravaged by opioids.

“This bill is a great example of the legislature and the governor coming together to do what is best for families in Wisconsin who have been afflicted by the opioid crisis. We commend them for their work.

“As a result of this legislation, counties will receive needed resources to assist individuals and families who have been affected by the misuse and abuse of opioids. Our urban centers and rural

## **Wisconsin County Executives AB 347**

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communities have been battling this epidemic and we are grateful for Governor Evers’ recognition that Wisconsin’s citizens cannot afford to wait even one day longer. His tremendous leadership in signing this legislation into law benefits every part of our state.”

## **Washington County Statistics**

- Between 2016-2019, there were 79 opioid-related deaths and 149 emergency room hospitalizations for opioid-related overdoses.
- The number of opiate/methamphetamine court cases increased from zero between 1999-2002 to 183 in 2020.
- More than 80 percent of children in foster care have a parent or parents who are abusing drugs.
- In 60-80 percent of child neglect/abuse cases, one or both parents are drug abusers.