

# County Executive Crowley: Announces launch of Overdose Dashboard

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**MILWAUKEE** - Drug-related deaths continue to rise in Milwaukee County and across the country. Milwaukee County has among the highest rates of overdose deaths in Wisconsin, and in the last two years record numbers of emergency calls related to overdoses have been seen. In order to understand the trends in both fatal and nonfatal overdoses and inform prevention efforts, a [Milwaukee County Overdose Dashboard](#) has been created. The dashboard serves as a resource for community members, organizations, and researchers working to reduce overdoses within the county.

“The first step in addressing any problem is acknowledging it exists. We’re taking that step forward with the new Overdose Dashboard which will serve as a resource for experts, and the public, to understand trends and contrasts between demographic groups and geographic locations across overdose events,” **said Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley.** “Milwaukee County is taking the drug epidemic seriously by prioritizing the delivery and analysis of near real-time data between multiplate partners - and using it to inform mitigation and treatment strategies that will reduce the likelihood of future overdose incidents. This dashboard serves as another tool for our entire community to use and reverse the disturbing overdose trends. Sharing this information with groups like the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, and other local public health officers, is how we strengthen the important collaborative work that will be needed to make the difference in combatting the overdose epidemic.”

The overdose dashboard evolved from collaboration between numerous organizations including the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and county and

state agencies including, but not limited to, the Milwaukee County's Office of Emergency Management and the Medical Examiner's Office. Details on the collaboration and funding supporting the dashboard can be found on the [dashboard webpage](#).

The dashboard will serve as a critical resource for the Overdose Public Health and Safety Team (OD-PHAST), a county-level initiative funded under a three-year grant awarded to the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office through the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP) that is bringing together cross disciplinary partners and aims to:

1. Expand the delivery and analysis of near real-time data between multiple public health and public safety partners.
2. Utilize both aggregate data and insights from case reviews to develop and implement strategies and recommendations for changes to reduce the likelihood of future overdose incidents.
3. Increase capacity to deliver timely toxicology findings to public health and public safety partners.
4. Enrich understanding of fatal overdose risk factors through expanded next of kin interviews.
5. Connect families impacted by overdose, particularly children, to services to mitigate the impact of the trauma experienced.

"The Overdose Dashboard is intended to build a public understanding of the overdose trends in Milwaukee County, which is critical in determining where additional prevention efforts are needed and gauging the impact of prevention initiatives within the county," **said MCW Assistant Professor Dr. Constance Kostelac**. "This will serve as a tool for the many agencies and partners, including the OD-PHAST partners, working toward reduction of overdose in our community."

Milwaukee County has among the highest rates of overdose deaths in Wisconsin. From 2014-2020, the opioid overdose fatality rate in Milwaukee County was 30.9 per 100,000 persons, more than twice the Wisconsin rate of 14.8 per 100,000. Deaths involving cocaine were over three times higher at 13.2 per 100,000 persons in Milwaukee County compared to 3.9 per 100,000 persons statewide in the same period. The number of overdose deaths rose 30 percent from 2019 to 2020, and the number of confirmed overdose deaths in 2021 exceeds 600.

“The Overdose Dashboard expands the delivery and analysis of near real-time data between multiple partners who are already utilizing data to develop and implement strategies and recommendations on how to reduce the likelihood of future overdose incidents,” **said Milwaukee County’s Chief Health Policy Adviser, Dr. Ben Weston.** “Leaders inside and outside of Milwaukee County government will be able to access the data and use it to inform mitigation and treatment strategies that will save lives and make neighborhoods throughout the county both healthier and safer.”

Visit the Milwaukee County Overdose Dashboard [here.](#)