

Rep. Meyers: Joint Committee on Finance approves the allocation of \$6 million in opioid settlement funds to Wisconsin tribes

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Madison, WI - Recently, after significant delays and alterations by the committee's Republican members, the Joint Committee on Finance approved the Wisconsin Department of Health's (DHS) plan to disburse opioid settlement funds.

Rep. Beth Meyers (D-Bayfield) released the following statement:

“While communities all across Wisconsin have been impacted by the increase in opioid related deaths, none more so than the tribal nations of Wisconsin. Since 2014, there has been a dramatic increase in opioid related deaths amongst the Native American population in Wisconsin. So much so, that two tribes within my district, the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, declared states of emergency in response to the opioid epidemic in 2018.

“Since 2020, opioid related death rates for Native Americans have doubled in comparison to the white population (39.6 vs 19.8) and continues to grow faster than all other populations in Wisconsin. For example, from 2020-2021 there was a reported 55% increase in deaths for Native American populations, in comparison to a 15% increase for all Wisconsinites

during the same time period.

“I want to thank the DHS along with Governor Evers for recognizing the importance of allocating funds to tribal nations in Wisconsin. The original plan presented by DHS allocated \$6 million of the settlement funds to tribes of Wisconsin, and I am happy to see that much needed funding was not once again cut from tribes. This will allow for prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery strategies to be implemented in tribes all across Wisconsin.

“I will continue to advocate for the tribal nations of Wisconsin to receive the funding they deserve, not only in the fight against the opioid epidemic, but across the board.”