

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Votes for federal funding legislation that increases support for communities and families struggling with mental health and substance use disorders

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin voted for much-needed funding increases for mental health and substance use disorder programs in the 2022 fiscal year appropriations bill that passed Congress last week.

“Many people are struggling with depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges as the result of a pandemic that has brought disruption, isolation, and stress. We need to provide more support for people and this legislation does just that, including better mental health services for kids who have had to endure a great deal throughout this pandemic,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “The opioid epidemic and substance use disorder crisis continues to touch every community across Wisconsin and the pandemic has only made this epidemic worse. With a very troubling increase in fentanyl deaths in Wisconsin, I voted for this legislation because it will deliver an increase in federal funding for our local and state partners to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. This legislation takes bold action that will help address this public health crisis and save lives.”

Mental Health

Senator Baldwin worked to secure and support significant new investments to improve mental health access and the nation’s system of crisis care. These investments include:

- \$857.6 million, a 13.2 percent increase, for the Mental Health Block Grant, which continues a 5 percent set aside for states to create crisis care programs.
- \$315 million, a \$65 million increase, for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics.
- \$120 million, a \$13 million increase, for Project AWARE, which will expand efforts to identify and help children and youth in need of mental health care, including through addressing the needs of children who have experienced trauma.
- \$111 million, a \$90 million increase, for Department of Education programs designed to increase the availability of mental health services in schools, including by expanding training programs to prepare new school counselors, social workers, and psychologists.
- \$10 million for a new grant program to improve mental health crisis care responses.
- \$10 million, a \$2 million increase, for infant and early childhood mental health.
- \$2,539,000 for Milwaukee County to support the construction of a Mental Health Emergency Center.

In addition, the omnibus legislation includes \$101.62 million for the transition to 988 for the national suicide prevention lifeline, a \$77.6 million increase from FY21. It also includes \$5 million for the new Behavioral Health Crisis and 988 Coordinating Office at HHS. In 2019, Senator Baldwin introduced the bipartisan National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, which passed Congress and became law in 2020. Converting to this easy-to-remember, three-digit number will strengthen and expand the existing Lifeline network, providing the public with easier access to life-saving services. The Lifeline currently helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day. The 988 dialing code will be available nationally for call, text, or chat beginning in July 2022.

“We need to do everything we can to prevent suicide and that means improving the tools we have to help people who are suffering from depression or other mental health concerns. I’m very proud of working to get my bipartisan legislation signed into law and now we are increasing funding to implement 988 so that we make it as quick and easy as possible for Americans in crisis to get the help and support they need through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line,” **Baldwin said.**

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Baldwin secured congressionally directed spending that was included in the Omnibus Appropriations

Legislation for Fiscal Year 2022. Baldwin worked to include over \$2.5 million for Milwaukee County to support the construction of a Mental Health Emergency Center.

“I worked to include this federal funding because it delivers support for Milwaukee County,” **said Baldwin**. “This federal funding will support the construction of a Mental Health Emergency Center which will strengthen Milwaukee County’s continued efforts to take significant steps to address mental health. The new mental health emergency center will provide assessment, stabilization, emergency treatment and effective connections for follow up and ongoing inpatient, residential community-based outpatient and peer support services to children and adults experiencing a mental health crisis.”

Opioids & Substance Misuse

The United States reached new records in the number of drug overdose fatalities during the COVID-19 pandemic with more than 100,000 lives lost to drug overdoses between April 2020 and April 2021. The omnibus legislation that Senator Baldwin voted for includes important investments to address the nation’s substance misuse crisis, including:

- \$4.2 billion, a 9 percent increase, across the Department of Health and Human Services to address opioid abuse.
- \$1.525 billion for the State Opioid Response Grant program.
- \$490 million for opioid overdose surveillance and prevention at CDC.
- \$135 million targeted to help affected rural communities.
- \$101 million, a nearly 11 percent increase, for medication assisted treatment.
- \$80 million to address the needs of children affected by the opioid crisis.
- \$50 million increase for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).