

Washington County Exec Schoemann: New county-wide protocol strengthens response to drug endangered children

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West Bend, WI – County leaders have developed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among all Washington County law enforcement jurisdictions, Washington County Health and Human Services Department, Lakeshore Regional Child Advocacy Center, Children’s Wisconsin, Advocate Aurora, and FRIENDS, Inc. This agreement details a comprehensively designed response where the efforts of law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, and health professionals are coordinated to best identify, respond, and protect children who are exposed to drug manufacturing, distributing, or abuse.

Over 50% of reports of child neglect in Washington County are due to a caretakers’ drug use. Swift and careful coordination of the immediate response not only ensures the health and safety of children found in dangerous environments, it also advances the integrity of the investigative efforts of law enforcement and child protective services and promotes information sharing across county systems.

“Having a comprehensive plan in place to protect children who are in drug-endangered environments will maximize positive outcomes for the child’s safety with a swift and coordinated response,” said County Executive Josh Schoemann. “Creating this MOU outlining best practices among all the collaborating partners was a two-year effort, and will help streamline coordinated investigations among the partner agencies.”

Hartford Police Chief Scott MacFarlan said, “This multidisciplinary effort underscores

the importance of a consistent and thorough response to incidents where children are exposed to illegal substances in the home and ensures they receive the proper intervention services. Law enforcement investigations into these challenging situations benefit from the community-based partnerships established in the MOU, with the hope of breaking the cycle of substance misuse and stabilizing families in their communities.”

All participating parties will formally sign the agreement at the Hartford Police Department to symbolize the work that has gone into the development of this agreement and the commitment from all parties to continue to ensure the safety and well-being of victims and their families.

DATE: Wednesday, October 12, 2022

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Hartford Police Department

109 N Main St, Hartford

To report suspected child abuse or neglect call 262-335-4888.