

Waukesha County Exec Farrow: Waukesha County focuses on schools, crisis response during National Prevention Week

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(Waukesha, WI) – This National Prevention Week, Waukesha County leaders announce new efforts to prevent substance abuse in the community. The Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has allocated additional grant funds to schools and the community to enhance primary substance abuse prevention; the Waukesha County Sheriff's Office will implement a pilot program that deploys mental health professionals to crisis calls in real-time; and peer support will increase at the community level.

“Prescription drug misuse, especially of opioids, is devastating to our community,” said Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow. “Prevention is an investment in the lives and safety of all our residents, so the County is using multiple strategies to stop substance abuse before it can start.”

Expanding Prevention Programs in Schools

Waukesha County will offer approximately \$200,000 in new Substance Abuse Block Grant (SABG) funds to expand prevention efforts in schools and the community. The grants can fund six primary prevention strategies: information dissemination, education, alternative activities, problem identification and referral, community-based process, and environmental. Schools and licensed prevention agencies each have the opportunity to apply.

Waukesha County has partnered with Addiction Resource Council, Inc. to offer free

technical assistance to develop, implement, and document programming to schools applying for grants. Awardees may collaborate with other licensed Substance Use Prevention Agencies for activities not provided by schools.

Ongoing Implementation of Embedded Mental Health Professional Program

The Waukesha County Sheriff's Office (WCSO), in partnership with HHS, will implement the embedded Mental Health Professional program, which began as a pilot program in November 2021. The Sheriff's Office has experienced improved response to mental health and crisis calls since the pilot program began. It will be fully implemented at the end of June.

"This program accommodates the changing needs of the community," said Waukesha County Sheriff Eric Severson. "Mental health-related issues continue to rise, and this program protects both the safety of our deputies and those in crisis, while maximizing our deputies' time for public safety and criminal issues."

Since WCSO became the first and only County agency to embed a mental health professional in its office:

- Average response time for the mental health professional to arrive on scene to meet with a person experiencing a mental health crisis is 22.1 minutes, compared to 45 minutes for similar responses with non-embedded mental health professionals.
- The embedded mental health professional clears deputies on 38% of calls for service because the situation is not imminently dangerous and does not require law enforcement's presence.

Mental health-related issues and contacts with law enforcement continue to rise dramatically, both locally and nationally. In 2018, Waukesha County Sheriff's deputies responded to 236 calls for service related to a mental health and/or substance use crisis that required the assistance of an HHS crisis clinician. Such calls for service have increased, with 691 calls occurring in 2020 and almost 800 calls in 2021.

More Information About Overdose Prevention in Waukesha County

Waukesha County utilizes a collective impact approach through multiple programs

to fight the opioid crisis, including participation in National Prescription Drug Takeback Day, the Wisconsin Injection Drug Use Prevention Project, and its Drug Treatment Court.

- In 2022, Waukesha County will utilize grants to launch medicated-assisted therapy awareness campaigns to highlight treatment options for individuals in recovery.
- HHS has added an additional full-time peer support specialist to its Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use Services Clinic Staff.
- The Waukesha County Heroin Task Force's prevention action team is conducting community presentations to highlight the risks associated with prescription misuse.
- HHS maintains a strong relationship with the [AODA Volunteers of Waukesha County](#), who provide valuable outreach, education and support services to individuals in recovery, or who are considering abstinence from drugs or alcohol.
- [The Women's Health and Recovery Project](#) (WHARP), coordinated by Waukesha County HHS, assists women with substance use disorders, and their children, who have complex needs such as housing, employment, mental health and physical health issues, transportation, and childcare.
- Since 2017, more than 291 documented lives have been saved, at least 289 of those were overdoses reversed by Naloxone, as a result of the Waukesha County HHS Naloxone Project.

About Addiction Resource Council (ARC), Inc.

ARC promotes the prevention and treatment of substance abuse and supports the recovery of individuals and families affected by the chronic disease of addiction throughout Waukesha County. ARC collaborates with local and state initiatives such as the Waukesha County HHS Board's Substance Use Advisory Committee, the Waukesha County Heroin and Illicit Drug Task Force, Your Choice to Live, WisHope Recovery, Wisconsin State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (SCAODA,) and many more. Waukesha County supports ARC's initiatives through community partnerships, and Substance Abuse Block Grant Funding awards. More information is available at www.addictionresourcecouncilwaukeshawi.org.

About Waukesha County

The mission of Waukesha County government is to promote the health, safety and

quality of life of citizens while fostering an economically vibrant community. More information is available at www.waukeshacounty.gov.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) at and [Twitter](#) for updates about County programs and events. More information about Waukesha County's efforts to combat the opioid crisis is available at www.waukeshacounty.gov/overdoseprevention.