

Wisconsin Counties Association: Counties applaud approval of allocation of opioid settlement funds

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The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) is commending the Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) for their approval today of an initial plan that would allocate opioid settlement funds to counties toward abatement efforts.

“The state of Wisconsin and today’s action by JCF demonstrates their commitment to working alongside counties and partnering with us for abatement efforts,” said WCA President & CEO Mark D. O’Connell. “From our jails to child welfare, counties have been hit hard and are fighting the opioid battle on the frontlines. We greatly appreciate this ongoing commitment to partner with counties.”

Thursday’s action by JCF included a phase one for immediate needs/harm reduction, a phase two for one time capital projects and targeted populations and a phase three for long-term investment projects. Items passed impacting counties includes:

- Creation of grants for law enforcement totaling \$3 million, with \$1 million for communities with populations less than 70,000 to be used for community drug disposal, treatment for inmates, training for law enforcement and pre-arrest or pre-arraignment strategies.
- Investments of \$2 million for medication-assisted treatment expansion.
- Investments in room and board for residential substance use disorder treatment centers totaling \$2.5 million.

In 2021, the legislature approved, and the Governor signed legislation (2021 Wisconsin Act 57) outlining the distribution and use of settlement funds of over \$400 million. Based on that action, 70% of settlement proceeds will be allocated to

Wisconsin counties and the 16 litigating local municipalities, while 30% will be directed to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Importantly, all of the funds will be directed toward abating the profound epidemic that has had a tremendous negative impact on our communities.

“Our counties throughout the state commend JCF for beginning action on getting these funds to our communities so they can have the greatest impact,” said O’Connell. “Because of our collective efforts by Wisconsin counties, the legislature, attorney general and governor, our state was first-in-line for these settlement funds and we are proud to see these dollars getting to our communities so quickly to fight the scourge of opioids.”