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For Immediate Release
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WCA Commends Governor Walker, Lt. Governor Kleefisch & Rep. Nygren for Today's Comprehensive Opioid Package Announcement

As counties in every corner of the state feel the staggering impact of heroin and opioid abuse, the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) is commending Governor Scott Walker, Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette) for a comprehensive opioid package announced today.

"This conversation is a top priority for our 72 counties and we are proud to work alongside Governor Walker, Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch and Representative John Nygren to address this epidemic," said WCA Executive Director Mark D. O'Connell. "Today's announcement is a multi-pronged approach to an issue that is putting a tremendous service delivery burden on counties and the taxpayers, as well as touching the lives of everyday Wisconsinites."

According to O'Connell, the increased incidences of heroin and opioid use across the state are having a profound effect on counties. They are seeing its impact on the street, in jails, courts, on medical examiners and our most vulnerable citizens – young children. County human services departments statewide have seen large increases in out-of-home placement costs as parents struggling with addiction are unable to safely care for their children.

Today's announcement includes many provisions that will assist counties and address this epidemic, including:

- A law enforcement and public safety package that creates innovative treatment programs, drug trafficking grants and regional drug prosecutors. It also provides funding for evidence-based programming, gives judges victim impact panels as a sentencing option, and funding for the expansion of family drug courts.
- There is also a healthcare/workforce component of the package that includes county worker training tools, substance abuse counselor barrier removal, psychiatric mental health nurse training, continuing education for prescribers, and creating a public school health curriculum.

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“We commend Governor Walker, Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch and Representative Nygren for their unwavering commitment to finding broad based and innovative solutions to the opioid epidemic currently facing our state,” said O’Connell. “We look forward to working with them and the legislature to put in place these initiatives.”

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