



# Waukesha County

## Office of the County Executive

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **WAUKESHA COUNTY MARKS INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY WITH RENEWED COMMITMENT TO BATTLE OPIOID CRISIS, PROCLAMATION**

**(WAUKESHA, WI)** – Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow proclaimed today Overdose Awareness Day in Waukesha County to raise awareness that the tragedy of overdose death is preventable, and to announce recommitted resources to fight the opioid epidemic.

“Our prevention efforts, combined with those of our community partners, have saved at least 240 people from overdose over the past five years,” said Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow. “We saw a consistent decrease in opioid hospitalizations and deaths, until the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted both lives and the programs in place to help those at risk. Today, I pledge to renew these prevention efforts and to dedicate more resources to fighting an epidemic that impacts everyone.”

#### **Waukesha County Will Adopt Collective Impact Approach**

County Executive Farrow will make opioid mitigation a key goal in his Strategic Plan through 2022, which identifies this issue as an area of primary investment.

Additionally, Waukesha County expects to benefit from the proposed settlement of the Multidistrict Litigation (MDL) involving three major pharmaceutical distributors. The County is developing a plan that will leverage those funds effectively through a data-driven collective impact approach. This approach will combine County efforts with those of multiple community partners to fight the pandemic together, targeting four key areas: Prevention, Treatment & Recovery, Harm Reduction, and Criminal Justice.

Waukesha County’s collective impact approach is utilized throughout multiple programs to fight the opioid crisis, including participation in the Wisconsin Prescription Drug Overdose (WI-PDO) Project, the Women’s Health and Recovery Project (WHARP), and its Drug Treatment Court.

**(Continued)**

## **New Funding Continues Wisconsin Prescription Drug/Opioid Overdose-Related Deaths Prevention (WI-PDO) Project in Waukesha County**

Today marks the expiration of the five-year WI-PDO Project, a federal grant that awarded Waukesha County \$225,522 annually to prevent overdose deaths in the community. Since Waukesha County kicked off its plan in 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has:

- Documented 240 lives saved from overdose by local first responders and citizen members trained in use of Naloxone through the PDO grant.
- Conducted 439 Opioid Overdose Education Trainings with Naloxone for first responders, social workers, teachers and other associated professionals, and community members.
- Distributed 6,242 Naloxone (brand name: Narcan) kits free of charge.
- Conducted Opioid Education Sessions for 2,566 people, without Naloxone distribution.
- Trained 1,006 law enforcement officials representing 33 local law enforcement agencies in the county.
- Provided training for 4,387 people at 41 educational institutions and 191 local organizations.

Waukesha County will continue this life-saving work by transitioning to a sustainability grant. More information about the WI-PDO is at [www.waukeshacounty.gov/OverdosePrevention/](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/OverdosePrevention/)

## **The Women's Health and Recovery Project**

The Women's Health and Recovery Project (WHARP), coordinated by Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services, is using a community impact approach for service delivery to women with substance use disorders and their children, and who have complex needs such as housing, employment, mental health and physical health issues, transportation, and childcare.

## **Waukesha County's Drug Treatment Court**

Waukesha County's Drug Treatment Court is a post-plea, pre-conviction program that gives offenders the opportunity to have pending criminal charges amended if they address substance abuse issues through completion of a rigorous supervised program.

From March 2012 to June 2021, 196 of 374 total clients, have successfully completed Waukesha County's Drug Treatment Court program. The 61% success rate is higher than the national average for adult drug courts serving high-risk clients.

## **Prevention and Remembrance Event**

Tonight, August 31, 2021 the Waukesha County Heroin Task Force will hold an awareness event to further commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day in Waukesha County. It will take place at Frame Park (1200 Frame Park Dr., Waukesha) at 6:30 pm. Members of the public are invited to participate in events that will celebrate lives lost to substance use.

## **About International Overdose Awareness Day**

International Overdose Awareness Day is committed to providing a platform to acknowledge the grief felt by families and friends who have lost a loved one to overdose. More information is available at [www.overdoseday.com](http://www.overdoseday.com).

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