



# COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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News release

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## **Kenosha County receives federal grant to fight opioid addiction**

KENOSHA – A \$300,000 federal grant will enable Kenosha County to launch a new program to aid in the fight against opioid addiction.

With the grant funds, the county will begin an Opioid Overdose Reduction Project that will link overdose survivors and their family and friends with peer specialists, providing education and connections to recovery services immediately following an overdose event.

The federal funding, announced this week, is being provided through the Department of Justice’s Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Site-based Program, funded by the 2016 Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.

“This grant award is great news for Kenosha County as we continue to fight the opioid epidemic,” said County Executive Jim Kreuser. “Anything that helps us to help people put their lives back together after struggles with addiction is a win-win for our community.”

The Opioid Overdose Reduction Project aims to facilitate collaboration between law enforcement, first-responders, hospitals, public health, the recovery community and agencies that provide substance abuse treatment through the Kenosha County Opioid Task Force. A data-driven system will be developed to create a timely, detailed view of the local opioid addiction environment.

Kenosha Human Development Services will hire a team of certified peer specialists to be on call during peak hours to provide support and education immediately following overdose events, and short-term stabilization will be offered through the KARE Center, a licensed residential crisis stabilization and social detox facility operated by KHDS.

“Peer Support Specialists, people with training who themselves are in recovery, have proven invaluable in supporting others through treatment in our other behavioral health programs,” said LaVerne Jaros, director of the Kenosha County Division of Aging and Disability Services. “We are excited that we will now be able to offer support and coaching to survivors and their families

immediately following an overdose event. Our hope is to significantly reduce opioid overdoses and deaths.”

Establishment of the Opioid Overdose Reduction Project comes as Kenosha County has been disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. Kenosha County recently ranked first out of the state’s 72 counties for heroin-related deaths, fourth for opiate-related deaths, first for hospital encounters involving heroin and 14<sup>th</sup> for hospital encounters involving opiates, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

While there were 27 heroin-related deaths in the county between 2000 and 2008, 132 lives were lost between 2009 and 2016 – a 388 percent increase over the prior eight-year period. Kenosha County’s rates of 11.1 opioid deaths and 5.1 heroin deaths per 10,000 residents from 2010 to 2015 were higher than those of all other nearby Wisconsin counties.

Kenosha County continues to battle this epidemic through initiatives including the Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program, an intensive individual and group counseling program that includes the use of Vivitrol, a medication that helps to subdue opiate and alcohol cravings.

The county earlier this year also received a \$225,000 Prescription Drug Opioid Overdose Prevention grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to distribute naloxone, known commercially as Narcan, to law enforcement and other community agencies and stakeholders, to help revive people experiencing an opioid overdose.

For more information about the Opioid Overdose Reduction Project, please contact the county Division of Aging and Disability Services at 262-605-6646 or by email at [adrc@kenoshacounty.org](mailto:adrc@kenoshacounty.org).

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