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**WAUKESHA COUNTY ADDS MORE OVERDOSE AID KITS FOR PUBLIC USE,**

**LAUNCHES NEW HEAT MAP TO TRACK OPIOID OVERDOSES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

**(WAUKESHA, WI)** – Today, August 31, 2023, is International Overdose Awareness Day. It’s been just over one year, since Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow declared fentanyl a community health crisis. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, 100 times more powerful than morphine and fueling overdose deaths across the United States and Wisconsin.

The drug has had a devastating impact on our communities. In 2021, there were 105 overdoses in Waukesha County linked to fentanyl. Since Farrow’s declaration August 1, 2022, Waukesha County has responded in big and impactful ways. While we wait for data to be finalized from the Medical Examiner’s Office, 2022 appears to be on track for fewer overdoses.

By the end of 2023, nearly 200 Overdose Aid Kits (OAK) Boxes will have been distributed throughout multiple communities across Waukesha County.

These kits contain (naloxone) commonly known as Narcan, the lifesaving overdose reversal nasal spray, fentanyl test strips, a breathing mask and gloves.

Since August 2022, Waukesha County Health and Human Services has distributed almost 4,000 fentanyl testing strips into the community.

“Equipping the community with Narcan, educating them and teaching them how to use it, is one of the biggest ways we can reduce the number of deaths of fentanyl poisoning. An opioid overdose is a preventable tragedy,” County Executive Paul Farrow said.

Earlier this month, we placed several OAK boxes in County facilities for public use, including the Waukesha County Courthouse, Secure Courts Tower, Administration Center, Jail, Sheriff’s Department, Mental Health Center, Juvenile Center, all County parks, Ranger stations and beach stations.

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"We want Narcan to be viewed as a lifesaving tool just like AED machines and EpiPens. Access to all these tools makes Waukesha County a safer place to live,” HHS Director Elizabeth Aldred said.

Also on our [county website](https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/HealthAndHumanServices/clinical-services/OverdosePrevention/OverdoseData/), visitors can now view overdose data in their very own community, by viewing a brand new heat map.

Visitors can also view response summary and pinpoint the exact locations of the OAK boxes.

There’s still much work to be done, but we know our efforts are making an impact and we applaud all the organizations and businesses who have partnered with us in the fight against fentanyl.

Thursday evening the County Executive will join community members and the Waukesha County Heroin Task Force in Frame Park in Waukesha to honor the people whose lives have been altered by overdose with a candlelight vigil.

Waukesha County also has a number of resources and services to help those struggling with substance abuse. **Confidential Services Include:**

* Individual and Group Therapy
* Intensive Outpatient Program
* Consultation
* Diagnostic Evaluation/Referral
* Education
* Medication-Assisted Treatment
* [Overdose Prevention](https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/HealthAndHumanServices/clinical-services/OverdosePrevention/) & Naloxone Training
* Treatment Aftercare
* [Women's Health and Recovery Project (WHARP)](https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/HealthAndHumanServices/clinical-services/substance-use/WHARP/)

For updates about County programs and events, follow Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow on Facebook at  @[CountyExecutivePaulFarrow](https://www.facebook.com/CountyExecutivePaulFarrow) and on Twitter at [@WaukeshaCoExec](https://twitter.com/WaukeshaCoExec).

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