

RECOMMENDATION TO RESTORE ADDITIONAL OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS FOR
CREATION OF A CENTRALIZED HARM REDUCTION AND PREVENTION DROP-IN CENTER

The 2024 adopted operating budget created an Opioid Settlement Subcommittee of the Health and Human Needs (HHN) Committee to make recommendations for priorities to include in a request for proposals for services to be supported with opioid settlement funds. Since 1999, more than one million people have died of a drug overdose in the United States. The nature of this crisis has evolved rapidly in recent years, with synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, now dominating the drug supply. Amid an evolving and increasingly life-threatening substance use environment, harm reduction has become a pillar of America's overdose prevention strategy. Harm reduction is an evidence-based approach to engage and meet the needs of people who use drugs.

A 2024 resolution (RES-143) recommended to the HHN Subcommittee on Opioid Settlement Funds use of \$800,000 of these funds for the creation of a centralized Harm Reduction and Prevention Drop-In Center ("The Center"). At that time, Public Health Madison Dane County (PHMDC) identified an immediate need for expanding the capacity of harm reduction services through increased hours of operation for its syringe services program to ensure accessibility to the program for those using drugs and most at risk of drug overdose death. To meet this immediate need, \$331,200 of the \$800,000 from the Opioid Settlement funds initially recommended for creation of The Center were earmarked and used to fund the additional position support for expanded PHMDC syringe services.

The RFP for the Harm Reduction and Prevention Drop-In Center is now in the process of being developed. 2024 RES-143, which was passed in November 2024, stated that the RFP shall encourage collaborative applications that include strong community partnerships to provide culturally specific services and resources to meet the diverse needs for a safe and inclusive space, allowing the County to partner with service providers and a center operator that will serve mothers, babies, older Black men, queer individuals, and others most impacted by the harm caused by the defendants of the opioid settlement, and also serve as a safe space for the dual-stigmatized substance user without housing.

The Center will expand the services offered by PHMDC and provide more accessible and welcoming spaces to better adhere to the principles of harm reduction. It will incorporate the existing harm reduction services provided by PHMDC (syringe services, distribution of safe smoking supplies, education on and distribution of Narcan, and distribution of test strips for Fentanyl and Xylazine). In addition, The Center will provide new services in alignment with the national harm reduction framework, including drug checking, access to onsite wound care supplies, and enhanced overdose education opportunities through connection to peer services. Some of these services may be provided by PHMDC and other services would be provided by community partners selected through the pending request for proposals (RFP).

Because of the complex and holistic nature of the services and partnerships anticipated to be provided by the new Harm Reduction and Prevention Drop-In Center, and the scope of the needs that The Center is intended to address, the County must provide adequate initial resources to ensure the successful creation and implementation of The Center and its objectives.

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors reiterates
51 its support for the recommendations of the Opioid Settlement Subcommittee.

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53 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors recognizes the critical
54 need for a Harm Reduction and Prevention Drop-In Center that will effectively and holistically
55 address the complex range of community needs and achieve the County's harm reduction
56 goals.

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58 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors recommends that an
59 additional increment of \$331,200 in Opioid Settlement funding—the amount that was
60 segregated from the initial \$800,000 proposed for The Center to meet the immediate needs of
61 the PHMDC syringe services program—be restored to bring the total funding allocation to
62 \$800,000 for the development of the Harm Reduction and Prevention Drop-In Center.