



**For immediate release**

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## **Services Identified by Community as Top Needs to Address Opioid Crisis**

**Sauk County, Wis.** — In the coming years, Sauk County will receive at least \$2 million in Opioid Settlement funds as a result of national lawsuits against opioid-related corporations. In the fall of 2023, Public Health Sauk County surveyed the community to gather suggestions on how to use these funds locally to address the opioid crisis.

236 people completed the survey, most of whom work, live, and/or serve people in Sauk County. Respondents were mainly people who worked professionally and/or personally to support people impacted by substance use.

Survey respondents most often selected these strategies to address substance use:

- Increasing access to mental health services and both out-patient and in-patient treatment for substance use disorder.
- Continuing to provide a re-entry program at the jail
- Expanding access to peer support services
- Increasing availability of housing and transportation services
- Addressing the social-economic root causes of substance use, including living wages, affordable housing, social isolation, and discrimination

Note: Opioid Settlement funds cannot be used to enforce current laws; that is why law enforcement was not listed as a service to increase or expand on the survey.

“These survey findings are consistent with our current community health improvement plan and identified health priority areas,” shares Treemanisha Stewart, Health Officer for Public Health Sauk County. “For example, public health programs that provide peer support and a re-entry program at the jail began in 2021, and Mental Health and Housing Action Teams were formed in 2022.”





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What's next? Sauk County currently uses grants and other funds to address substance use. Funds from the Opioid Settlement may be used to continue these services when current funds are not available. Funds may also be used for the expansion of current services and providing new services that are proven to work to address substance use.

"I've seen firsthand how the opioid crisis is harming Sauk County families," Jessica Mijal, Director of Sauk County Human Services states. "This funding will be used for much needed treatment and support services to assist those seeking recovery."

To read more about the survey results, visit  
<https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/publichealth/opioid-settlement-funds-survey>.

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