

North Office

3328 U.S. Hwy 51 N
Janesville, WI 53545-0772
Mailing Address:
PO Box 1088
Janesville, WI 53547-1088

**Public Health**

www.co.rock.wi.us/departments/public-health

608-757-5440
608-758-8423 (fax)

South Office

61 Eclipse Center
Beloit, WI 53511

608-364-2010
608-364-2011 (fax)

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

To: Local Media

From: Rock County Public Health Department

Date: August 23, 2023

Stay Healthy During Back-to-School Season

Rock County, WI – As students across Rock County head back to school in the coming weeks, the Rock County Public Health Department encourages parents to add vaccines to their back-to-school checklist to protect against respiratory illnesses. Historically, Rock County sees an increase in respiratory illnesses like the flu, COVID-19, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) during back-to-school season as kids spend more time inside sharing close spaces with others.

Vaccination continues to be one of the best tools to prevent the spread and severity of respiratory illnesses like flu and COVID-19. Many pharmacies, including [CVS](#) and [Walgreens](#), are already offering flu shots for the 2023 flu season, along with free COVID-19 vaccines. As COVID-19 activity continues, staying [up to date](#) on the COVID-19 vaccine is more important than ever. [COVID-19 vaccines will also be updated this fall](#) to better protect against the current variants circulating throughout the United States. Visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/> to find flu and COVID-19 vaccines near you.

Along with the flu and COVID-19 vaccines, make sure kids are caught up on [routine vaccinations](#) before heading back to school. If you are unsure of which vaccines your kids still need for the upcoming school year, look up their vaccine records through the [Wisconsin Immunization Registry](#), or take the [Childhood Vaccine Quiz](#) to ensure your children are caught up on the recommended vaccines.

Vaccines are not the only tool that can help prevent illness this back-to-school season. Teach kids to stay healthy during back-to-school season by using these other preventative measures:

- Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

As the school year gets underway, it is the perfect time to get your child vaccinated to ensure they stay safe from common respiratory illnesses. Everyone plays a role in reducing the spread of respiratory viruses this back-to-school season.

Good luck to all Rock County students in the upcoming school year!

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Rock County Public Health Department serves Rock County residents by improving population health outcomes and removing barriers through community partnerships to provide everyone the opportunity to reach their full health potential. Visit the Rock County Public Health Department [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Please send all media inquiries to:

Molly Mueller, Communications Specialist

Rock County Public Health

608-247-1755

molly.mueller@co.rock.wi.us

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

To: Local Media and Press Release Subscribers
From: Katrina Harwood, Health Officer
Date: August 31, 2023

Rock County Public Health Offers Infant Safe Sleep Training to First Responders

Janesville, WI – On Wednesday, September 6, the Rock County Public Health Department (RCPHD) is partnering with [DOSE: Direct On Scene Education](#) to provide Rock County first responders with an innovative training to eliminate sleep-related infant deaths. DOSE training is made possible through Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) grant funding received by RCPHD.

Since 2018, there have been over ten (10) infant deaths due to unsafe sleep hazards in Rock County*. Unsafe sleep is a leading factor in sudden unexplained infant death in Wisconsin, especially among infants less than 5 months of age.**

According to the [Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin](#):

- From 2019-2021 in Wisconsin, there were 167 sudden unexpected infant deaths that occurred in the sleep environment.
- Approximately 98% of these had some sort of unsafe sleep factor present in their environment.
- An average of four (4) safe sleep recommendations were not being met at the time of the death.

Unsafe sleep factors and childhood deaths due to unsafe sleep factors are preventable with education and community support.

During the training, first responders will learn to identify and remove hazards from an infant's sleep space, and provide education to parents, while on scene during emergency and non-emergency 911 calls. First responders will also learn about community resources for families in need of extra service.

All Rock County Fire and EMS professionals were invited to attend the one-day training which is being held at Janesville Fire Department Station #1. Rock County police departments, as well as home visiting services such as Child Protective Services, Birth-to-3, and other child-focused organizations were also invited.

DOSE is being taught by Captain James Carroll (FLFR), who, along with Jennifer Combs (MSN, ARNP), created the program. DOSE is presented in a “train the trainer” format to allow sustainability within departments.

The program was piloted in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. According to the DOSE program’s lead, “We went from averaging 7-9 deaths per year to three in our first full year of running the program. The following year, the number was down to one with us now averaging 1-3 deaths per year in those high-risk zip codes. So, while we don't take direct credit for the decrease, we know that education empowers individuals which leads to better outcomes.”

DOSE is currently being used in 13 states. RCPHD is proud to facilitate this training in Rock County which will be the first county in Wisconsin to hold the training.

If members from the media are interested in an on-site interview between training sessions, please contact [Abbigail Brown](#), Public Health Nurse.

Sources: *Wisconsin Vital Records **[Wisconsin DHS](#)

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*Molly Mueller, Communications Specialist
Rock County Public Health
608-247-1755
molly.mueller@co.rock.wi.us*



BELOIT PUBLIC LIBRARY
CONTACT:
Amy Mitchell
Marketing & Communications Coordinator
608-346-7766
amitchell@beloitlibrary.org



ROCK COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
CONTACT:
Molly Mueller
Communications Specialist
608-247-1755
molly.mueller@co.rock.wi.us

August 7, 2023

Free NARCAN® Vending Machine FAQs

Beloit Public Library (BPL) is collaborating with the Rock County Public Health Department (RCPHD) and Vivent Health to be the host site of the City of Beloit's first NARCAN® vending machine that dispenses free NARCAN® Nasal Spray and fentanyl test strips. The following FAQs are answers to the most Frequently Asked Questions regarding this new initiative.

What organizations are involved?

Beloit's first NARCAN® vending machine is the result of a collaboration between Beloit Public Library, Rock County Public Health Department, and Vivent Health.

What is NARCAN®?

NARCAN® is a potentially lifesaving medication designed to help reverse the effects of an opioid overdose in minutes. It can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose. Examples of opioids include heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, and morphine. It is easy to use, and has been safely used on toddlers, dogs, and elderly patients who have accidentally ingested too much pain medicine.

Is this the first NARCAN® vending machine to come to the area?

This is Rock County's second such machine; the first was installed at the Rock County Jail in December of 2022.

What will be available in the machine?

NARCAN® Nasal Spray and fentanyl test strips will be available from the machine with instructions in both English and Spanish.

How does the vending machine work?

A person types in the code next to an item, and the item drops down in the tray below. No money is required, nor is the input of any identifying information. All products include directions for use in English, and a select number of items that are appropriately marked will also include directions for use in Spanish. Users will have the option choose to participate in an anonymous, 30-second survey that will help provide additional feedback regarding the process and the service.

Why does Beloit Need a NARCAN® Vending Machine?

Since January 1 of this year, a total of 19 suspected fatal overdoses were recorded in Rock County – 12 of them in Beloit. The number of non-fatal overdoses in the county during that same time was 129. These above-normal rates indicate there may be very strong opioids or other drugs mixed in the local drug supply. With the numbers of overdoses escalating, Beloit residents need quick and easy access to NARCAN® in an easily accessible location. Previously, obtaining NARCAN® required a prescription and/or an appointment.

Who is the target audience of the NARCAN® vending machine?

Since most opioid overdoses occur in the home and are most often witnessed, having a NARCAN® rescue kit nearby can make all the difference. The NARCAN® nasal spray and fentanyl test strips are for the family and friends of those who take opioids or prescription opioids, such as oxycodone or hydrocodone for pain. These tools are good to have on hand for a possible life-threatening opioid overdose emergency.

Who is paying for this machine and the supply of NARCAN®?

It is funded by a \$50,000 grant from the state's Opioid Settlement Funds received from the National Prescription Opiate Litigation. These funds paid for the machine, as well as NARCAN® Nasal Spray and fentanyl test strips to stock the machine. Vivent Health has stepped up to stock the machine when supplies run out.

Where will the NARCAN® vending machine be located?

The vending machine will be located inside Beloit Public Library's gallery near the front of the building and will be accessible any time the library is open: 9:30 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday through Saturday. On weekdays, the front doors are unlocked early at 7:00 a.m. to provide access to the bathrooms, Blender Café, and gallery where the vending machine will be located.

Why is this machine being located at Beloit Public Library?

Beloit Public Library is open 62 hours per week, centrally located in the City of Beloit on a public bus route, and handicap accessible. As a public library, it is a judge-free zone where anyone and everyone is welcomed. Roughly 475 visitors enter each day (post-covid) from a variety of ideologies, backgrounds, socioeconomics, ethnicities, religions, professions, family structures, and more.

Does this mean a lot of people use drugs at the library?

The location of the vending machine has nothing to do with the activity that occurs at the library ... but everything to do with libraries being places to access resources. NARCAN® and fentanyl test strips are provided in this machine and this location so residents can get the supplies they need to have on hand at the places where they live, work, and spend their leisure time – not necessarily for the use of patrons while at the library.

Why are there so many overdoses lately?

Illicit fentanyl is being laced into street drugs, and it only takes 2 MG of it to kill someone who has never used an opioid before. If a drug is not purchased through a pharmacy, there is a 98% chance it has fentanyl in it.

How do you administer NARCAN®?

Administering NARCAN® Nasal Spray is easy. The vending machine will have graphics and signage to display the process, as well as a QR code that links to a short, two-minute training video that shows not only how to administer NARCAN® but also how to recognize the signs of an overdose.

1. **PEEL:** Peel back the package to remove the device. Place your first and middle fingers on either side of the nozzle.
2. **PLACE:** Place and hold the tip of the nozzle in either nostril until your fingers touch the bottom of the patient's nose.
3. **PRESS:** Press the red plunger firmly to release the dose into the patient's nose.

Once the person has restored consciousness, please seek emergency medical treatment.

How do I know if someone is overdosing?

During an overdose, a person's breathing can be dangerously slowed or stopped, causing brain damage or death. It's important to recognize the signs and act fast, even before emergency workers arrive. If you think that someone is overdosing, give them naloxone. Its use will not harm a person who has not taken an opioid medicine. Signs of an overdose may include:

- Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils"
- Falling asleep or loss of consciousness
- Limp body
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Cold and/or clammy skin
- Discolored skin (especially in lips and nails)

What if I administer NARCAN® to someone who it turns out wasn't actually overdosing?

You can't give too much NARCAN®, and there is no harm if it is given if someone isn't overdosing.

Won't people steal the NARCAN® and get high from it?

All items in the machine will be available free of charge – and also are available for free from other local agencies. NARCAN® does not give a high; it removes a high.

Why is NARCAN® free and other life-saving drugs like insulin aren't?

NARCAN® is NOT free; a box typically costs \$50-\$75. However, non-profit organizations such as Vivent Health make it their mission to help the community through the distribution of free NARCAN®.

What are fentanyl test strips?

Fentanyl test strips are small strips of paper that can detect the presence of fentanyl in different kinds of drugs and drug forms.

How will we gauge success of this initiative?

Putting life-saving opioid antagonist in the hands of our community is a success in and of itself. Use will be measured by the number of boxes that are taken. Each person who takes NARCAN® or fentanyl test strips can choose whether or not to participate in an anonymous, 30-second survey that will help provide additional feedback regarding the process and the service.

Why are the organizations working together on this initiative?

The fentanyl crisis is large and will require a great deal of state and federal resources to turn around. While we can't easily solve the fentanyl crisis, what we can do is educate our community and provide residents with the tools they need to keep their loved ones safe from harm – if and when crisis hits close to home. We are not going to win the war on drugs, but we can recognize an overdose and possibly save lives with NARCAN®.

Where can I get help for my addiction?

For help and treatment for addictions, contact the Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Helpline, a statewide resource for finding treatment services and recovery supports. It is a free service that is available 24/7. Call 211 or 833-944-4673.

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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

BELOIT PUBLIC LIBRARY
CONTACT:
Amy Mitchell
Marketing & Communications Coordinator
608-346-7766
amitchell@beloitlibrary.org

ROCK COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
CONTACT:
Molly Mueller
Communications Specialist
608-247-1755
molly.mueller@co.rock.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2023

Free NARCAN® Vending Machine Now Available at Beloit Public Library

BELOIT, WI – Thanks to the collaboration of several agencies and a \$50,000 grant from the state’s Opioid Settlement Funds, Beloit now has access to free NARCAN® and fentanyl test strips via a vending machine located at Beloit Public Library.

Installed today, this is Rock County’s second such machine; the first was installed at the Rock County Jail in December.

This effort is the result of collaboration between Rock County Public Health Department, Vivent Health, and Beloit Public Library and is intended to help the community navigate an increase in deaths due to drug overdoses. Since January 1 of this year, there have been a total of 19 suspected fatal overdoses recorded in Rock County – 12 of them in Beloit. The number of non-fatal overdoses in the county during that same time is 129.

“Overdose deaths are preventable,” stated Katrina Harwood, Health Officer for Rock County. “Each overdose death leaves a lasting impact on family members, friends, and communities. We are grateful for the partnership with Beloit Public Library and Vivent Health to increase access to live-saving resources in Rock County.”

NARCAN®, a name-brand version of naloxone, is the only medicine on the market that can reverse an opioid overdose. Especially in its nasal form, NARCAN® is easy and safe to use. It can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose. There is no harm if NARCAN® is administered to someone who isn't overdosing.

To access the NARCAN® and test strips from the machine, a person simply types in the code next to an item, and the item drops down in the tray below. No money is required, nor is the

input of any identifying information. Instructions for administration of the antidote are available both in an easy-to-read graphic and in a two-minute video accessible through a QR code. Spanish instructions are available in addition to English.

Users of the machine can choose whether to participate in an anonymous, 30-second survey that will help provide additional feedback regarding the process and the service.

“This Narcan vending machine will be an important harm reduction tool in Beloit,” said Brooke McKearn, prevention specialist at Vivent Health. “I am proud to be a part of this process coming to life.”

Until now, the Beloit community did not have easy access to these products. Obtaining it required a prescription and/or an appointment. With the number of overdoses escalating, residents needed quick and easy access to NARCAN® in an easily accessible location. Beloit Public Library volunteered to be that location.

Centrally located in the City of Beloit on a public bus route, the library is handicap-accessible and open 62 hours each week. It is a judge-free zone where anyone and everyone is welcomed. Roughly 475 visitors enter each day from a variety of ideologies, backgrounds, socioeconomics, ethnicities, religions, professions, family structures, and more.

The vending machine will be located inside the library’s gallery near the front of the building and will be accessible any time the library is open: 9:30 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday through Saturday. On weekdays, the front doors are unlocked early at 7:00 a.m. to provide access to the bathrooms, Blender Café, and gallery where the vending machine will be located.

Anyone who has a loved one who uses opioids is encouraged to have these products on hand in case of an accidental overdose. For more information about the NARCAN® vending machine, see our FAQs. For help and treatment for addictions, contact the Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Helpline, a statewide resource for finding treatment services and recovery supports. It is a free service that is available 24/7. Call 211 or 833-944-4673.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: Local Media

From: Katrina Harwood, Health Officer, Rock County Public Health Department; Sgt. Jay Williams, Rock County Sheriff's Office; Greg Winkler, Rock County Human Services Department

Date: August 17, 2023

Opioid Settlement Funds Update and Implementation Plan approved by Rock County Board of Supervisors

Rock County, WI – A plan was approved that would move forward with spending funds from the National Opioid Settlement at the August 10 Rock County Board of Supervisors meeting. [The Update and Implementation Plan](#) spans three years and would fund projects prioritized by an assessment, community survey, and listening sessions conducted in 2022 and presented in a [Report of Recommendations](#).

The opioid epidemic has taken a toll on Rock County residents and the impact continues to be felt. Rock County's opioid death rates nearly tripled from 2010-2020. Then in 2021, Rock County experienced its highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded, with 75 lives lost. Addiction and lost lives have ripple effects that impact the entire community. These opioid settlement funds can begin to address the harms of the opioid epidemic.

“By working across several departments and really listening to community input, we have developed a plan focused on projects that will have a meaningful impact on the opioid epidemic by addressing specific local needs,” said workgroup leader, Shari Faber of Rock County Public Health.

Funding to expand a contract with Justice Point would allow for more in-depth assessments for people entering the criminal justice system to identify those in need of opioid treatment. Funding for the purchase of medication for opioid use disorder for those in the Rock County jail would reduce the risk of relapse and overdose at release.

Funds will be granted through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to support sober recovery residences as well as higher level treatment programs which may include day treatment, in-patient, and/or residential treatment. A Request for Proposals process will also be used to support youth prevention efforts. Additional prevention funds will be used for

safe disposal of prescription opioids. Organizations interested in applying for these funding opportunities should watch for RFP announcements.

This plan would allocate funds that have been received or are expected to be received by the end of 2023. The plan will be revised annually, and additional spending will be determined after funds are received.

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