

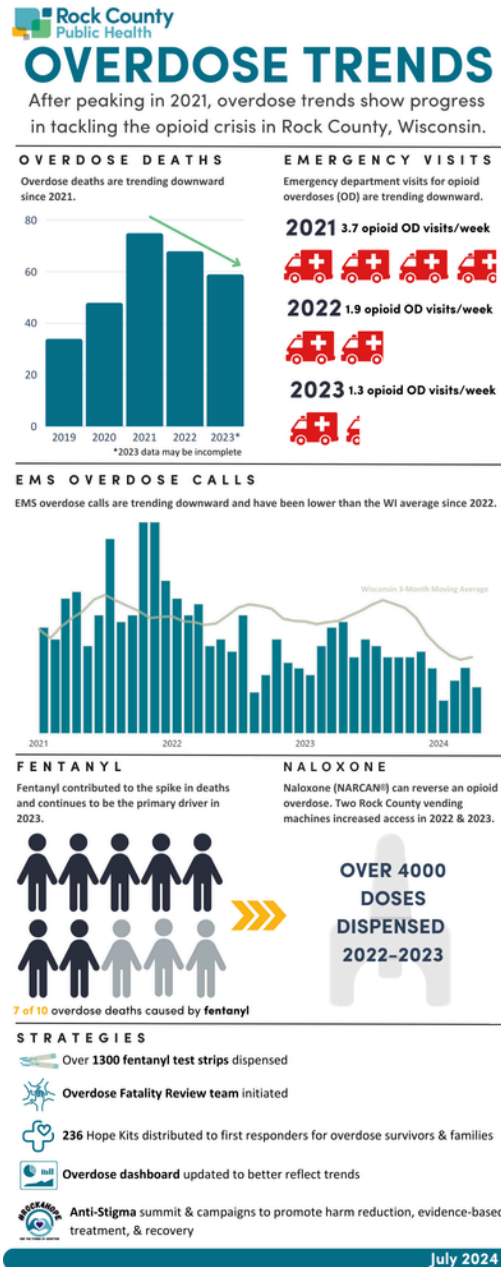
Overdoses Trending Down in Rock County

After peaking in 2021, overdose trends show progress in tackling the opioid crisis in Rock County. Between 2021 and 2022, overdose deaths were rising nationally while Rock County saw a 9% decrease. Provisional data for 2023 shows a decrease around 13% for Rock County, while nationally, overdose deaths declined by 3%.

While lower death rates mean fewer grieving families, reductions in EMS and Emergency Department visits have also had an impact on our community. In 2021, Rock County's EMS calls for overdose were frequently higher than the state average, but since April of 2022, have stayed below the state average. EMS calls for overdoses decreased by approximately 41% from 2021 to 2023. Weekly average Emergency Department visits for opioid overdose were down 63% from 2021 to 2023.

"Overdoses are horrible situations that EMS and Fire Departments respond to. These situations not only are extremely sad for family members, but also everyone involved. First responders are exposed to a lot of trauma in their field of work and these traumas are both physical and mental. A reduction in overdose calls makes a difference and we are thankful for the collaborative efforts of Rock County Public Health and all of their partners," said Addison Sennett, Town of Beloit Fire Department Lieutenant.

Since 2021, efforts to counter the high rate of overdoses have included various partners collaborating to provide education, outreach, harm reduction supplies, and support for evidence-based treatment.



Rock County Public Health (RCPH) initiated a Fatality Review team in 2022 to investigate the factors contributing to fatal overdoses and to make recommendations for changes that could prevent overdoses. In February 2023, RCPH started a leave-behind program for first responders where “Hope Kits” are given to overdose survivors to provide them with harm reduction supplies and resources. In March 2023, RCPH noticed an uptick in deaths where cocaine and fentanyl were combined and used grant funds to raise awareness with a bar coaster campaign about the presence of fentanyl in other drugs. Later in 2023, they sponsored a multi-media campaign called “Rock4Hope” focused on reducing stigma and promoting recovery from addiction.

Naloxone/NARCAN® training has reached thousands of people through the efforts of a local harm reduction agency, treatment providers and County staff. Vending machines and emergency boxes with naloxone have increased access to this life-saving opiate reversal drug in Rock County. The first naloxone vending machine was placed at the Rock County jail in December 2022. A second vending machine, which also contains fentanyl test strips, opened in August 2023 at the Beloit Public Library. Recently, several additional [vending options](#) have been added around the county.

The progress made in regard to the opioid crisis is a great example of the power of collaboration across agencies in responding to a complex issue. Although the trends are encouraging, the efforts to reduce overdoses are far from finished. You can see more overdose data on the [Rock County Public Health Overdose Dashboard](#) on RCPH's website.

Rock County Overdose Fatality Review Report



June 2022-June 2024

BEGINNING

After a record number of overdose deaths in Rock County in 2021, the need for an Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) Team became evident. The first meeting of our team occurred on June 2, 2022.

MISSION

Rock County Overdose Fatality Review Team will work to reduce overdose deaths in our county. This will occur through an evidenced-based process that improves service systems and resources.

PURPOSE

- Develop an understanding of the causes and incidences of overdose deaths in the county
- Recommend changes to law, policy, and practice that relate to drug overdoses
- Inform public health and public safety of emerging trends in overdose events
- Promote cooperation and coordination among agencies that investigate drug overdose deaths and provide services
- Develop plans for enhancing efforts of organizations that partner in local OFRs

Behind the numbers and the information you see in the following pages are real people who lived full, complicated lives. They are our family members, our friends, and our neighbors. And they were loved.



22
Cases
Reviewed by
OFR Team

Overdose Fatality Review Team

In June of 2022, Rock County held its first Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) meeting. The OFR is led by RCPH and includes members from Human Services, the Sheriff's Office, local health systems, local police departments, local fire departments, drug treatment providers, local towns/cities, harm reduction providers, peer support specialists, Department of Corrections and the State Lab of Hygiene.

Cases are deidentified and reviewed by this group with a goal of reducing future overdose fatalities. During reviews, this team identifies factors that contributed to the death, missed opportunities for intervention, and system gaps. Then, recommendations are made for systems or policy changes, awareness raising, or other activities that could prevent future deaths.

Other goals include increasing cross-sector collaboration and identifying trends. [View the June 2022-2024 OFR report.](#)

Opioid Settlement Funds Update

On behalf of Rock County and the departments involved in the Opioid Settlement Workgroup, RCPH is pleased to share an update about the first year of funded projects for the Opioid Settlement Funds. Thanks to community input, a plan was developed that directs funds to areas of need in Rock County.

Treatment was identified as a need for Rock County, specifically the higher levels of treatment needed in early recovery. Community Health Systems will be awarded \$350,000 to start an Intensive Outpatient Treatment Program in Beloit.

Sober living was identified as a very high need, and three additional sober living residences will be opening in Rock County with support from the funds:

- Sunrise Sober Living will open a home for up to 10 residents.
- Life Worth Living will open a sober living home for up to six female residents.
- Pathways Sober Living will address a specific need for housing that accommodates residents and their minor children.

These grants will provide the startup funds to increase available spaces for people in recovery to live as they rebuild their lives. Each home will receive between \$100,000 and \$200,000.

A current contract with Justice Point has been expanded by \$100,000 to allow for more early screening and referral to treatment as people enter the criminal justice system. By identifying people in need of treatment earlier in the process, we can reduce repeat offenses and get people the help they need. Up to \$50,000 of the funds will pay for medication for opioid use disorder for inmates being released from jail who will benefit from this type of treatment. These inmates will be connected with community treatment providers to continue their treatment.

Prevention efforts are being funded for the following organizations and projects:

- Janesville Mobilizing 4 Change (JM4C) was awarded \$70,000 to implement Teen Intervene, a substance use intervention program for teens in Rock County, and facilitate youth leadership groups in Janesville Middle Schools.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT

In 2024, Rock County began to invest Opioid Settlement Funds into the community. New initiatives, as well as continued efforts, ensure the progress continues.

PREVENTION

Grants were awarded for youth prevention projects.

Janesville Mobilizing 4 Change (JM4C)

Teen intervention & youth leadership

Building a Safer Evansville (BASE)

Catch My Breath anti-vaping & QPR* suicide prevention

Youth2Youth4Change (Y2Y)

Managing My Mental Health for afterschool programs

Milton Youth Coalition (MYC)

Strengthening Families Program

*Question, Persuade, Refer

SOBER LIVING

Grants were provided to support three new sober living homes in Rock County.



TREATMENT

Grant funds were awarded to increase access to treatment in Rock County by adding a new intensive outpatient program.



COUNTY PROJECTS

Funds were used to expand substance use assessment to identify treatment needs as people enter the criminal justice system.

Funds were used to provide safe disposal packets to be dispensed with opioid prescriptions.

Funds were provided for medication for opioid use disorder for inmates being released from jail.

STATE GRANTS

Rock County Public Health received a Public Health Vending Machine grant for the machine at the Beloit Public Library.

Rock County Sheriff's Department received a grant for treatment and education at the jail.

NARCAN and fentanyl test strip kits are provided free of charge to Rock County agencies enrolled in the NARCAN Direct program.

Human Services received funds to cover room and board for Medicaid members with an opioid use disorder who are in residential treatment programs.

OPPORTUNITIES

Funds from the National Opioid Settlement will continue to flow into Rock County until 2038.

The Opioid Settlement Assessment identified the following priorities:

Treatment
Sober Living
Youth Prevention
Youth Intervention
Case Managers/Navigators
Certified Peer Support Specialists

Additional needs and priorities will be identified as we continue to navigate the overdose crisis.

Rock County
Public Health
July 2024

- Youth2Youth4Change (Y2Y) was awarded \$10,000 to implement a mental health curriculum, Managing My Mental Health, at 2 after-school programs in Beloit.
- Building a Safer Evansville (BASE) was awarded \$10,000 to implement 2 evidence-based programs, Question, Persuade, Refer-QPR (a suicide prevention program) and Catch My Breath (a vaping prevention program).
- Milton Youth Coalition (MYC) was awarded \$10,000 to offer Strengthening Families, an evidence-based program for families with children ages 10-14 years that is shown to improve communication in families and subsequently reduce substance abuse and delinquency risk factors.

One of the guiding principles of the Opioid Settlement Workgroup was transparency around the spending of these funds and we will continue to provide updates as the funds are allocated. The Opioid Settlement Workgroup, consisted of RCPH, Rock County Human Services, Rock County Administration, Rock County Corporation Counsel, and the Sheriff's Office.

RCPH is proud of the important progress this workgroup and the community have made in reducing cases of opioid overdose in Rock County and look forward to continuing this lifesaving work with our partners. For more information, visit our [website](#) or call (608) 757-5440.



Questions or feedback? We would love to hear from you! [Send us a message](#) on our website.

