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State Agencies Join Governor Walker's Efforts to Combat Opioid Abuse in Wisconsin

Madison – Yesterday, Governor Scott Walker issued [Executive Order #228](#) which directs several state agencies to take action against opioid abuse in Wisconsin. The executive order calls on resources from the Department of Administration (DOA), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS), Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), Commissioner of Insurance (OCI), and Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), as well as the Governor's Task Force on Opioid Abuse which is Co-Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and State Representative John Nygren.

"The safety and wellbeing of Wisconsin citizens is a top priority for our administration," DOA Secretary Scott Neitzel said. "Combining our state resources to combat opioid abuse enhances the effectiveness of our efforts. We thank Governor Walker as well as Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch, Representative Nygren, and Task Force members for their leadership and dedication to ensuring our citizens have the support and resources they need to fight this epidemic in Wisconsin."

"Since 2013, DCF has been in discussions with our county partners on the damaging effects that opioid abuse has on parents' ability to maintain a safe and nurturing home for their children," said DCF Secretary Eloise Anderson. "In accordance with Governor Walker's Executive Order, DCF has created an Opioid Steering Committee composed of a broad cross-section of stakeholders and partners. We will continue to engage in further strategic planning and development of cross-systems collaborative strategies to ensure safe homes for the children of Wisconsin."

"The Wisconsin Department of Corrections is committed to combating the illicit use of opioids," said DOC Secretary Jon Litscher. "Under Governor Walker and Representative Nygren's leadership, DOC has begun operating a pilot program that enables offenders releasing from prison to access Vivitrol and intensive counseling in an effort to reduce the potential for relapse upon their release into the community. I look forward to continuing our work to keep offenders clean and to provide opportunities for them to access training and employment opportunities."

"We applaud Governor Walker and the Task Force members for recognizing the opioid epidemic is larger than any one agency, and requires an 'all hands on deck' approach to ensure we are doing all we can to protect the health and safety of all who live here," said DHS Secretary Linda Seemeyer. "At DHS, we are already working on our request for additional federal funds under the 21st Century Cures Act. This assistance will help fuel our fight against opioid addiction."

“I am very proud of the efforts that DSPS has put forth thus far in combatting the growing opioid abuse epidemic,” said DSPS Secretary Dave Ross. “I know that with our upcoming launch of the enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and the work of the other agencies and members of the Governor’s Task Force on Opioid Abuse, we will continue to make strides to keep dangerous drugs from being abused and misused.”

"DWD looks forward to offering training grants to develop in-demand health care professionals, who can help the state address and manage its opioid related challenges," DWD Secretary Ray Allen said. "We also look forward to working diligently with the Workers Compensation Advisory Council to institute best practices for addressing this issue."

“The WDVA is proud to be a part of the effort in Wisconsin to curb opioid abuse,” said WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos. “From building awareness among the veteran community of opioid-related resources to continually being tenacious in following best practices for opioid prescription and pain management at our Wisconsin Veterans Homes, we will do all we can to stop this crisis.”

“I am honored to be a member of the Task Force on Opioid Abuse and committed to help identify solutions to end opioid abuse and overdoses in Wisconsin,” said OCI Deputy Insurance Commissioner JP Wieske. “Insurance coverage is an important issue for the victims suffering from this epidemic.”

“WHEDA will strongly support Governor Walker’s directive through its continued commitment to finance affordable housing with supportive services for individuals in need,” said WHEDA Executive Director Wyman Winston.

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