

The WHA Quality Team is Partnering to Lead the Charge to Improve Access to Opioid and Substance Use Treatment in Rural Wisconsin

Millions of Americans struggle with opioid addiction. In Wisconsin, opioid and other substance use has seen a marked uptick in the past two decades; a trend that intensified during the pandemic. Notably, heavy alcohol consumption, opioid overdose fatalities, and methamphetamine-related incidents have surged. Despite the escalating substance use and associated disorders, there has been a documented decline in the number of Wisconsin residents receiving addiction treatment services. These concerning trends have disproportionately affected rural areas, where access to prevention and treatment services lags urban areas.



Shockingly, 70% of Wisconsin's rural counties lack an opioid treatment program or prescribers equipped to address opioid use disorder. The Rural Health and Substance Use Clinical Support (RHeSUS) program, a collaborative effort by Wisconsin Hospital Association and the University of Wisconsin–Madison Program for Research, Outreach, Therapeutics, and Education in the Addictions (PROTEA), launched in January 2022 in efforts to improve access to treatment in rural Wisconsin by enhancing educational offerings and support for health care professionals serving those who struggle with opioid and other substance use disorders. Over two years, this program has successfully disseminated evidence-based training and education; fostered beneficial partnerships; and positively impacted healthcare providers, teams, collaborators and stakeholders. Offerings customized to current trends and have been developed to support those who treat and care for people struggling with substance use disorders in rural Wisconsin at no cost to participants.

For information on how you can participate, click the links below or simply click the meeting links provided at the scheduled times.

[Monthly virtual lunch and learn series](#)

Third Monday of every month

[Join Webex Meeting](#) | 12:15 – 1:15 p.m. CST

- 6/17/2024 – Neonatal abstinence syndrome/withdrawal
- 7/15/2024 – Cases – Hospital patients with OUD
- 8/19/2024 – Resources for patients, families, and providers: identifying appropriate treatment

[Substance Use Disorder Office Hours](#)

Third Tuesday of the month

[Join Zoom Meeting](#) | 12 – 1 p.m. CST

Save the date for a fall Substance Use Disorders Management Boot Camp - September 19-20, 2024 in beautiful Door County, Wisconsin, more details to come!

Funding is provided by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health from the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP).

Other Articles in this Issue

- [Only One More Week to Register for the 2024 Wisconsin Rural Health Conference](#)
- [Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez to WHA's Public Policy Council: Important to "Shore Up" Health Care's Workforce](#)
- [U.S. House E&C Committee Lawmakers Spar Over 340B Program Oversight](#)
- [Health Care Emergency Readiness Planning: WHA Reminds Hospitals and Local Emergency Partners to Prepare for Milwaukee Hosting Republican National Committee in July](#)
- [The WHA Quality Team is Partnering to Lead the Charge to Improve Access to Opioid and Substance Use Treatment in Rural Wisconsin](#)

- [Fast Facts from the WHA Information Center: Lyme Disease](#)