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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: Local Media
From: Katrina Harwood, Health Officer
Date: September 8, 2022

Rock County Workgroup Makes Recommendation for Opioid Settlement Funds

Rock County, WI – A workgroup tasked with making recommendations regarding the funds coming to Rock County from the National Opioid Settlement has submitted their report to the Rock County Board of Supervisors. The workgroup held two listening sessions and conducted a survey to gather community feedback. Recommendations include the following suggested uses (in no particular order):

- Create the equivalent of 1 FTE (full time position) to oversee the proposed strategies
- Increase access to sober living
- Increase access to higher level treatment options located in Rock County (including inpatient, residential, and/or day treatment)
- Provide evidence-based, youth substance use prevention and/or intervention
- Provide substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health assessment with rapid access to treatment in the criminal justice system
- Increased Case Managers/Navigators with access to flex funds
- Increased Certified Peer Support Specialists
- Other recommendations (as funds allow):
 - Transportation and childcare for appointments (therapeutic childcare as possible prevention)
 - Stigma reduction campaign
 - Training for law officers about SUD/mental health and resources
 - Public education and awareness about SUD/mental health and available resources

Although settlement funds may not be sufficient to complete all recommendations, these funds provide an opportunity to respond to current needs and prevent future harms resulting from the opioid epidemic. “The opioid epidemic has had a significant impact on individuals, families, and our community,” stated Katrina Harwood, Health Officer. “Opioid settlement funds can help support and supplement existing evidence-based strategies to

mitigate the negative health impacts and can address service gaps.” The feasibility of implementing the recommendations will also depend on whether a portion of the funds are securitized and therefore available for an upfront investment.

The next steps will be determined after the County Board of Supervisors meeting.

The [full report](#) is available on the Rock County website under County Board of Supervisors, Reports.

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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 at www.co.rock.wi.us/departments/public-health and follow them on social media @rockcountyphd.

Please send all media inquiries to Media.PublicHealth@co.rock.wi.us.