

OPIOID NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

WCA Ad Hoc Task Force on Opioid Abatement Strategies

What is a needs assessment?

A systematic gathering and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data about the target community to identify and address the local opioid impact. A successful needs assessment will help the community:

- Understand the nature, extent, and impact of identified problems at the local level.
- Uncover community conditions including factors that drive the issue, systems gaps and challenges, disparities across geographic regions and populations, and existing community assets to build upon.
- Identify effective solutions.

Technical Assistance and Resources Available to WCA and Individual Counties:

- NACo's [Opioid Solutions Center](#) will include an Opioid Needs Assessment Toolkit to support local jurisdictions in conducting their needs assessment.
- [Opioid Response Network](#) provides free and localized technical assistance; needs assessments are a key area of expertise. Submit a brief description of your request and they'll respond within 48 hours.
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health has created the [Guiding Principles](#) to ensure proper spending of opioid litigation funds.
- WI Department of Health Services offers assistance to provide specific and more localized overdose- related data. Assistance can be requested at DHSDPHDataResourceCenter@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Basic Steps of a Needs Assessment:

1. **Define needs assessment objectives.** (Examples: Understand impacts of opioid use and opioid use disorder (OUD) in our community; Assess assets and barriers related to treatment and recovery services in our community; Determine gaps and needs to decrease overdoses, improve access to treatment, and support long-term recovery).
2. **Be realistic about resources, capacity and timeline.** Identify a lead agency/person to support the needs assessment process.
3. **Use data to identify the local issue(s).** Identify data sources; Collect data (see Table A for examples of data; hold site visits or other meetings to hear from treatment and recovery providers, people in recovery, people with OUD, etc.); Analyze data collected; Develop themes from what you learn.

4. **Summarize findings:**
 - a. Opioid impact (overdose, overdose death, early use by youth, over prescribing, EMS runs, Emergency Department (ED) visits, etc.)
 - b. Condition of OUD treatment and recovery services
 - c. Condition of risk/protective factors related to substance use (examples of factors)
 - d. Identification of gaps and challenges in local systems
5. **Identify and prioritize strategies** that can impact the issues identified in the data assessment.
6. **Develop recommendations** (connect to guiding principles and opioid remediation uses).
7. **Get feedback from stakeholders** on your draft findings; Incorporate feedback into final report.
8. **Communicate findings** to stakeholders and community.
9. **Take action;** create an implementation and evaluation plan.

TABLE A: Examples of Data Sources and Types of Data to Assist Needs Assessment

Opioid Related Data	
Data Source	Type of Data
Wisconsin Department of Health Services Opioid Data Summary Dashboard	Overdose deaths, opioid-related hospital visits, the rate of opioid prescriptions dispensed by age
Wisconsin Vital Records Office/Coroner's Office	Toxicology/cause of overdose death; helps understand overdose drug trends in community (fentanyl, heroin, meth, etc.)
Overdose Fatality Review Teams	Cause of overdose deaths; demographics of who is impacted; conditions that led up to death; systems gaps; community recommendations
Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey	Youth substance use data
Hospital and EMS data	Response to overdoses; data can be tricky depending on how coding is done; some of this data is available in the state dashboard
Additional state and local data collection that may be available:	DHS Spike Alert pilot; PDMP dashboard; ED2R+ programs, ODMAP programs; peer/rapid response services; human services clinical assessment and referral summary; crisis calls
Community Condition Data	
Data Source	Type of Data
Substance Use Prevention: local youth coalitions and programs; Alliance for Wisconsin's Youth; Drug Free Communities initiatives	Priorities and initiatives to address youth substance use prevention; local risk and protective factors that impact youth substance use; drug disposal programs
Harm Reduction Services: Vivent Health, DHS Narcan and Fentanyl Test Strip program, local harm reduction programs	Availability and access to Narcan and fentanyl test strips; syringe services programs
SUD Clinical Assessments: Human Services, local contracted service provider	Number of assessments; rate of OUD compared to other SUD; ease of access to assessment, wait times, support for referral to treatment and services

Medical and Social Detox Services: Medial providers, treatment providers, recovery organizations	Availability and access to medical services during detox between assessment and start of treatment; social detox or other safe housing options while people wait for treatment or participate in outpatient treatment
Law enforcement and legal system: local police/Sheriff's departments, DA's office, Human Services	Support services through law enforcement, diversion and supports through DA's office and court system (Drug Court, SOAR/COSSAP programs, harm reduction and SUD services and supports through jail and post release from incarceration); drug disposal programs
Treatment Services: treatment providers, local human services departments	Type of treatment options available including inpatient, outpatient, MOUD (medications for opioid use disorder, i.e. methadone, suboxone, vivitrol) and dual diagnosis SUD/mental health disorders; number of inpatient and outpatient services; barriers to treatment access including wait time, cost/financial support, transportation access, child care services, etc.; availability and access to aftercare services
Recovery Services: local recovery organizations; recovery group leaders (esp. for rural counties)	Availability and access to support meetings for OUD; availability and access to transitional and sober living; barriers to accessing treatment services (transportation, work schedule, child care, language, etc.); peer specialist and recovery coach services; navigation services to community resources;
Overall community risk/protective factor assessment:	Community condition of affordable housing, employment options, transportation access, child care services, access to medical services

State Databases Available (many have filters to see county level data):

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) Controlled Substance Dispensing: The dashboard collects information submitted by pharmacies about controlled substance prescriptions. <https://pdmp.wi.gov/statistics/controlled-substance-dispensing>

WI Adult Behavioral Risk Surveys: WI surveys that assess risk factors and health indicators among adults, including questions about alcohol and drug use. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/stats/brfs.htm>

WI Department of Corrections Overdose Dashboard: Dashboard of overdose events that occurred among adults on community supervision by county. <https://doc.wi.gov/Pages/DataResearch/OverdoseDashboard.aspx>

WI Department of Health Services (DHS) Overdose Dashboards: County-level look at opioid hospital visits, opioid overdose deaths, stimulant hospitalizations, stimulant deaths, and all-drug deaths in Wisconsin. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/data-reports-studies.htm>

WI (DHS) County Opioid Treatment Dashboard: County-authorized Medicaid and private insurance treatment data by county for the state of Wisconsin. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/treatment-data-county.htm>

WI Department of Justice Uniform Crime Reporting Data Dashboard: Law enforcement incident data dashboard; drug-related offenses by substance type. <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/wibrs-data>

WI Mental Health Statistics: Reports on gaps, trends, and surveys and a dashboard of mental health services provided by public behavioral health. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh/county-services-dashboard.htm>

WISH Queries: Create custom data tables based on county, substance type, and demographics for overdose deaths and hospital encounters. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/index.htm>
WI State Crime Lab Drug Cases Dashboard: The WI State Crime Lab dashboard details the types of substances found in tested samples. <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/wscl/chemistry/wscl-drug-cases>

National Mental Health and Substance Use Resources Available:

Prevention of Substance Use Overview: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/prevention>
Risk and Protective Factors Brief: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190718-samhsa-risk-protective-factors.pdf>
Harm Reduction Overview: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/harm-reduction>
Recovery and Recovery Support Overview: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/recovery>
Medication Assisted Treatment Overview: <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment>
Co-Occuring Substance Use and Mental Health Disorders: <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/what-to-look-for/mental-health-substance-use-disorders>
Surgeon General Spotlight on Opioids: <https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/>

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