

112 Otter Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54903-2808
Phone: 920-232-3000

211 N Commercial Street
Neenah, WI 54956
Phone: 920-727-2894

www.winnebagopublichealth.org



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**Winnebago County
Health Department**

Media Contacts:
Ashley Mukasa, Communications Specialist
Winnebago County Public Health
920-232-3352
amukasa@winnebagoountywi.gov

Jennifer Skolaski, Facilitator
Winnebago County OFR Team
jskolaski@winnebagoountywi.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review Annual Report Released Fentanyl continues to be the primary cause of overdose deaths

OSHKOSH, WIS. (July 17, 2023) —The Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) team released its 2022-2023 Annual Report summarizing local fatal overdose data, themes and recommendations for preventing overdoses in Winnebago County.

The OFR team consists of 47 partners, representing 36 local organizations, all working together to create change in our community and save lives. The team started meeting five years ago, and they meet monthly to review cases of people who have lost their lives to an overdose and make recommendations based on the data.



"Being able to review someone's life is an amazing honor that uncovers opportunities for change and improvement," said Jennifer Skolaski, facilitator of the Winnebago County OFR team. "The trust that partners bring to the table--holding each other accountable to the people who have lost their lives--is unlike anything I have seen before."

In 2022, 37 overdose deaths were confirmed by the Winnebago County Medical Examiner's Office. The majority of the deaths occurred among individuals ages 25 to 54, and Fentanyl was listed as a primary cause of death in 24 of the overdose deaths. The OFR team identified the following major themes:

- Minors left behind due to overdose death lack support and access to vital services for children and families who experience trauma.
- Most victims who died of an overdose had a history of mental health disorders and did not receive the treatment services needed.
- A strong recovery community is critical to reduce the reoccurrence of use and counteract the shame and stigma many people experience.
- Touchpoints with prison or jail systems shortly before death were common. Increasing recovery services, peer support and transitional services would boost support upon release.
- Most victims died without Narcan and without anyone nearby. Mitigating potential dangers through harm reduction is vital.
- Many victims felt isolated and unsupported.

Based on cases reviewed and data trends, the OFR team is focusing on the following priorities for 2022-2023:

- Close gaps in communication between systems to strengthen the continuum of care.
- Identify children falling between gaps and connect them with care.
- Focus on preventative efforts.

"People are struggling and we, as a community, have to continue working to keep them alive," added Skolaski.

The report outlines ways to get involved, help and support the team's work. This includes connecting to the [We Heart You app](#), picking up [free Narcan](#) at the Winnebago County Public Health Department, connecting those in need to the [Solutions Peer Response Team](#), and volunteering with [Breakwater](#) to help prevent and reduce youth substance use in Winnebago County.

For more information on the Winnebago County OFR Team or to read the full Annual Report, visit www.winnebagopublichealth.org or call 920-232-3000.

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[Direct Link to the 2022-2023 OFR Annual Report](#)