

WCS Connection



Drug-involved overdose deaths in local communities across the state and nation continue to be a persistent and deadly problem that must be addressed. Unfortunately, drug

overdose deaths. By 2019, the number increased to 70,630, and by 2021, that number increased to approximately 107,000, representing a sharp increase during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Milwaukee County, drug-related overdose deaths increased from 419 in 2019 to 674 in 2022, again representing a sharp increase during the pandemic years. Many reports have linked the stress and isolation experienced during the pandemic as reasons for the sharp increase in drug overdose deaths. Ironically, the federal COVID-19 public health emergency ended on May 11th. However, in the aftermath of the pandemic, our communities are left with the vexing challenge of dealing with a drug overdose death surge exacerbated by the pandemic that will not recede with the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The overdose death numbers in Milwaukee County are slightly better for January-September of 2023 compared to the same time for 2022 (498 versus 505). The 1% decrease in the numbers during the last year is nothing to celebrate, but at least suggests we may be heading in the right direction. Milwaukee County leaders have declared that

have a serious public health epidemic. Many organizations like Wisconsin Community Services have stepped up to provide, and in our case expand, services to address substance use issues and are working collaboratively with others to improve the situation. As a community, we are doing more in harm reduction to mitigate the number of deaths and the overall negative impact of illicit drug usage, along with enlisting the support of people with lived experience to be leaders in combating this problem. To be clear, we have a long way to go. We are just at the beginning stages and will need the commitment of everyone pulling in the same direction to reach our goal of eradicating this problem in our communities. We simply cannot afford to let this problem continue to destroy people. families, and communities. Clarence Johnson



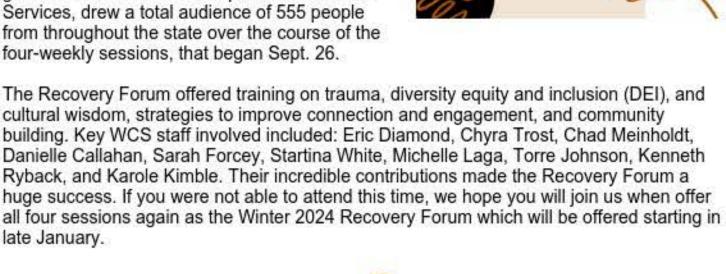




suspensions, all of which disproportionately harm people of color." WCS **WCS Hosted its First Recovery**

loss, police contact, legal system involvement, and debt associated with driver's license

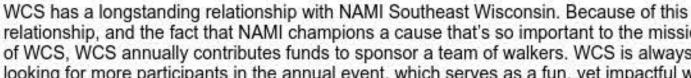
By Eric Diamond, LCSW, Director of Innovation Falland Special Projects at WCS RecoveryA small team of Wisconsin Community Services (WCS) staff recently developed and hosted the Forum organization's first Recovery Forum, a four-

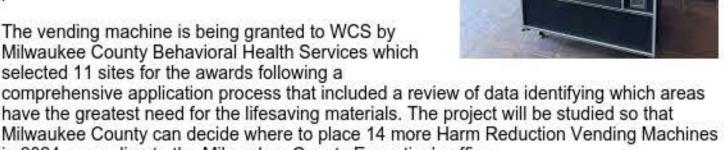




NAMIWalks on Oct. 7, continuing the organization's tradition of supporting a NAMI Southeast Wisconsin event that advocates for "mental health for all." Walking under the name "WCS Stimga Stompers," the team of WCS employees, their families, and friends raised more than \$535 - more than double the goal they had set.

WCS







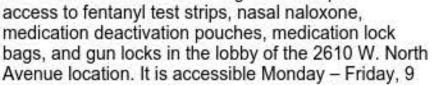
strengthening the community. People in attendance had the opportunity to network with employers and service providers, gain exposure, and connect with some of the resources available in Milwaukee. WCS invited vital service providers and businesses in the community to participate by sharing their resources and information. The event was open to the public and everyone enjoyed a complimentary lunch and a short program highlighting the contributions of local

field. Knowledge of the justice system and case management experience is preferred. Part-Time Caseworker – OWI Kenosha Enjoy fulfilling work by providing pretrial case management of repeat intoxicated drivers for the Circuit Courts of Kenosha County. The person hired for this position will handle scheduling and provide weekly supervision, conduct program orientation and intake, administer and record random breathalyzer tests and urinalysis drug testing, and more. The position requires approximately 29 hours of work per week. Qualified candidates will have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, social work, or a related field. Knowledge of

and family team meetings, completing wellness checks, and more. Qualified candidates must have a bachelor's degree pertaining to education or human services, a working knowledge of youth development, and at least one year of experience providing mental health services.

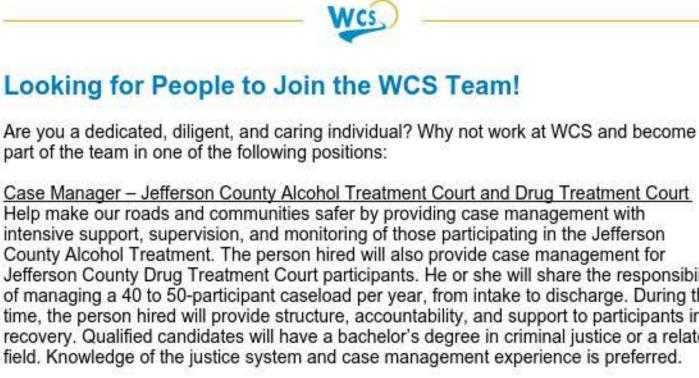
> Click Here to Make a Donation to wcs Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. 3732 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 320

Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS) advocates for justice and community safety, providing innovative opportunities for individuals to overcome adversity. WCS is a 501(c) 3 non-profit agency that provides services in southeastern Wisconsin. WCS has been serving the community successfully for 111 years.



Annual WCS Community

The 7th Annual Community Resource & Job Fair was held on Sept. 13 at the WCS North Campus, Organized by the WCS Black Male Advisory Council (BMAC), the event served as a platform for essential information sharing in areas such as



the justice system and case management experience is preferred. Youth CCS Care Coordinator Create positive change in the lives of children and their families by working as a Youth CCS Care Coordinator. This position utilizes the Wraparound Practice model, which emphasizes individualized, strength-based, trauma-informed, community-based care for

children and adolescents. The person hired will maintain a caseload of approximately 14 youths and families. This involves developing comprehensive crisis plans, facilitating child

We invite you to visit <u>www.wiscs.org/careers</u> to view a full list of current job openings at









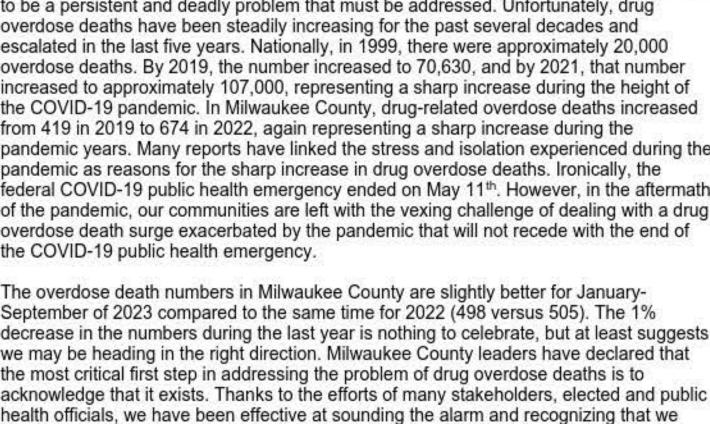




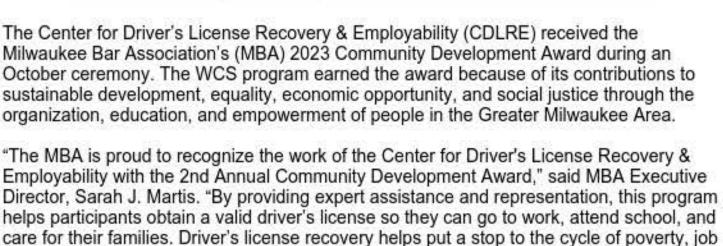


From the desk of the WCS President & CEO: **Drug Overdose Deaths Persist**

overdose deaths have been steadily increasing for the past several decades and escalated in the last five years. Nationally, in 1999, there were approximately 20,000







Forum

late January. WCS Participated in 2023 NAMIWalks WCS participated in the annual

relationship, and the fact that NAMI champions a cause that's so important to the mission of WCS, WCS annually contributes funds to sponsor a team of walkers. WCS is always looking for more participants in the annual event, which serves as a fun, yet impactful way of building community awareness of mental health.

Harm Reduction Vending Machine Placed at WCS North Campus A vending machine carrying potentially lifesaving supplies has been placed at the WCS North Campus. The "Harm Reduction Vending Machine" provides free

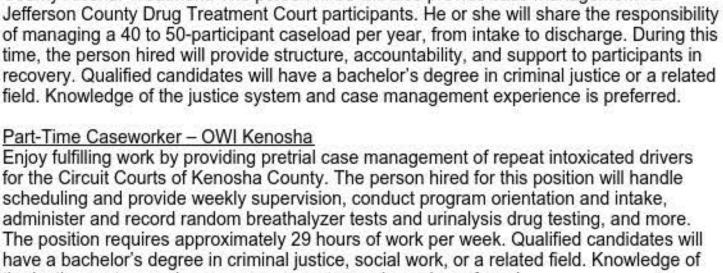
a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday – Sunday, 8 a.m. to 12

in 2024, according to the Milwaukee County Executive's office. In early 2023, the Milwaukee County Board voted to allocate \$11 million in opioid settlement funds to support 15 projects over the next three years. In addition to the harm reduction supplies, these projects include education and treatment for youth involved in the justice system and other opioid prevention measures. Milwaukee County has one of the highest rates of overdose deaths in Wisconsin.

p.m.

adversity.







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