

Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Awarded Nearly \$2 Million Grant

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, with Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary-designee Dawn Crim, announced Monday the [Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program \(ePDMP\)](#) will receive \$1,945,652 from a competitive U.S. Department of Justice grant program. The ePDMP is an award-winning tool that promotes responsible opioid prescribing and generates state-wide prescribing data.

[Hospitalizations for opioid overdoses are up this year](#)

, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and experts believe COVID-related isolation and stress are at least partly to blame.



“This is great news for Wisconsin and will enable the Department of Safety and Professional Services to make a good tool even better,” Gov. Evers said. “Especially as COVID-19

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continues to put additional stressors on folks across our state, we have to recognize how the opioid crisis continues to affect families in Wisconsin and across the country, and this funding will better position us to respond.”

The award was announced by [the Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program](#), a part of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, [earlier this month](#)

. The DSPS, which developed the ePDMP with the [Wisconsin Controlled Substances Board](#) (CSB) and continues to operate it, will use the funding for overall infrastructure enhancements that will increase security, user satisfaction, and adoption.

Healthcare providers, including physicians, dentists, and some advanced practice nurses, consult the ePDMP for real-time patient prescription history when making prescribing decisions about opioids, benzodiazepines, and stimulants. The ePDMP also aggregates its prescription and dispensing information on its dashboard and to generate county- and state-level trend reports that assist healthcare and law enforcement agencies in their work to combat the opioid crisis.

Launched in 2013, the ePDMP has contributed to a significant reduction in opioid prescribing (annual prescriptions dispensed in 2019 were just over 3,300,000 compared to more than 5,000,000 in 2015), has virtually eliminated “doctor shopping” practices where patients seek multiple pain prescriptions from multiple providers, and has transformed Wisconsin prescribing culture.

The ePDMP also has other valuable functionality, including analytics-driven alerts that inform prescribers of certain risk factors, including recent use of multiple prescribers or pharmacies, early refills, or concurrent benzodiazepine and opioid prescriptions. The system also alerts prescribers with law-enforcement information, such as an individual’s opioid-related overdose events or suspected violations of the controlled substances act. The CSB releases ePDMP reports [quarterly](#) and annually, and the [statistics dashboard](#) allows public health officials and researchers to quickly and efficiently access data about the controlled substances dispensed to Wisconsinites, the use of the ePDMP, and law enforcement trends. The ePDMP is connected to 24 other state PDMPs, including those of bordering states Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois and Iowa.

“Our efforts to curb opioid use remain critically important and the ePDMP is still an invaluable tool. I am grateful for the grant funding that will keep it current and accessible,” said Secretary-designee Crim.

In addition to its role with the ePDMP, the CSB also holds an annual Law Enforcement Hearing. Members of the law enforcement community are invited to deliver testimony about drug activity in their communities so that the CSB can consider whether to schedule new substances. The first-hand testimony from what is happening in all parts of the state is critical to efforts to curb illegal drug activity, as some drug arrests cannot be prosecuted when they involve dangerous but unscheduled substances. Scheduling substances also helps raise

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awareness among emergency responders so that they can administer appropriate countermeasures. The 2020 hearing is on Friday, November 13, at 9:30 a.m.

In addition to operating the ePDMP and administering the CSB, the DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, supports dozens of boards and councils, enforces state building codes, and runs the state fire prevention program. A fee-based agency, the DSPS is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations.