

Agenda Item Report



Winnebago County
The Wave of the Future

DATE: January 9, 2024

FROM: Office of the County Executive

RE: Budget Transfer \$80,083 – Public Health Vending Machine Grant

General Description:

The State Department of Health Services has awarded the health department grant funding to increase availability and accessibility of Narcan and Fentanyl Test Strips via vending machine access. Two vending machines would be funded with this grant.

Action Requested:

Approval of the grant with the state and subsequent appropriation of funds.

Procedural Steps:

Committee of Jurisdiction: Public Health	Meeting date: 12/15/2023
Action taken: Budget transfer approval	Vote: 4-0
Personnel & Finance Committee	Meeting date: 1/4/2024
Action taken: approved	Vote: 3-2
County Board	Meeting date: 1/16/2024

Background:

Last year, Public Health, in collaboration with Human Services and the District Attorney's office, applied to a funding opportunity to install vending machines with access to drug harm reduction items such as opioid antagonists (Narcan) and Fentanyl Test Strips in Oshkosh at CAB (outdoor on Otter Street in vestibule) and at Neenah Human Services building (outdoors). These vending machines are climate controlled and monitored with internet connection. The machines may require a user specific code to access through the health department harm reduction program and partner organizations.

This resolution has been redrafted from a previous resolution passed by the Board of Health and Personnel and Finance Committee in July. This resolution was redrafted to address concerns. The medical examiner is supported of the redrafted resolution.

Access to Narcan reduces overdose deaths, most of which are accidental and due to fentanyl addition to opioid and non-opioid substances. Fentanyl test strips can alert a substance user to the presence of fentanyl and modify use or avoid use to lessen the likelihood of an overdose. This proposal has been reviewed by corporation counsel to address any concerns related to liability.

Policy Discussion:

Several changes were made from the original resolution:

- 1) Prohibition of syringes and needles: While state statute does not include these items as drug paraphernalia, the resolution prohibits these items from the machines.

- 2) Access to the machines: The code to machines will be provided with consultations with the county or community partners. Ideally, those using the machines are referred to treatment and assessed for resources.
- 3) Education Materials: All items in the vending machine are required to include information on how to access treatment and other sobriety resources.
- 4) Other Public Health Items: A need may arise for water, gloves, hats, CPR masks, or other items to be included. The resolution expressly prohibits any items that are commonly used as drug paraphernalia, regardless of whether the law exempts the item or not.

In counties where the vending machines were not owned and operated by the county government, machines made their way to public places including libraries, colleges, tech colleges, and other locations. Should the board accept this grant, the vending machines will have the prohibition of items used to administer illegal drugs. Such a protection would not be included if the vending machines are operated by other organizations. In short, with approving the resolution, the board has the controlling power over what is included in the machines.

Winnebago County has experienced clients looking for opioid antagonists after hours, during weekends, and on holidays. These vending machines will provide that option if the person is willing to be known to the county departments. Unlike a soda vending machine, access will be limited to those with a code. A code is provided after a referral to the vending machines and can expire after a period of time.

Winnebago County continues to invest in treatment. Successful programs such as the jail's STAR program, the DHS/DA collaboration Connect program, safe streets initiative, and other substance use referrals make a difference in the community. These vending machines are a tool in the box to help fight the opioid crisis.

Attachments:

Resolution
Budget Transfer