

Annual Report

2025



Cheers to all the staff who participate in our annual Trike Race fundraiser for the United Way!

Our Culture

514 Riverview Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53188

(262) 548-7212
hhs@waukeshacounty.gov

www.waukeshacounty.gov/HHS

Mission

WE ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE WHILE
ASSURING CRITICAL NEEDS ARE MET.

Vision

A CONNECTED, RESILIENT COMMUNITY
WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES.

Values

Collaboration: We leverage individual and partner strengths to achieve a shared purpose and common goals.

Accountability: We make prudent fiscal decisions, act and respond with integrity, and provide high-quality programs.

Respect: We honor the dignity, culture and diversity of the people with whom we work and serve.

Engaged Workforce: We actively create an environment of transparency, trust, shared responsibility and inclusivity while valuing professional development and work/life balance.



Innovation: We intentionally implement creative solutions that foster meaningful change to best meet the needs of our community and position the department for the future.

Self-Determination: We engage individuals through a strength-based approach to make informed choices that positively impact quality of life.

Advisory & Standing Committees

- Aging & Disability Resource Center Advisory Board
- Child & Family Services Advisory Committee
 - Coordinated Services Team Committee
- Children's Community Options Program (CCOP) Advisory Committee
- Interagency Program for the Intoxicated Driver (IPID) Committee
- Joint Mental Health Center Conference Committee
- Mental Health Advisory Committee
 - Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) Coordinating Committee
- Public Health Advisory Committee
- Substance Use Advisory Committee
- Veterans Service Commission

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County Executive

Paul Farrow

Health & Human Services Board

Board Chair

Co. Brd. Supervisor

Larry Nelson

Citizen Member

Mary Baer

Citizen Member

Christine Beck

Citizen Member

Mary Berg

Citizen Member

Vicki Dallmann-Papke

Co. Brd. Supervisor

Joel Gaughan

Co. Brd. Supervisor

Christine Howard

Citizen Member

Dr. Kim McElroy

Citizen Member

Robert Menefee Jr.

Letter from the Director

Dear HHS Board and Waukesha County Community,

In 2024, Health and Human Services integrated a Continuous Quality Improvement model into the way in which we provided exceptional quality service to Waukesha County. This service provision approach incorporates four basic tenants of accountability including streamlining our services, community partnerships, maximizing resources, and the use of data in decision making.

Team members worked diligently to utilize real-time data to drive meaningful action. By developing public facing annual reports, dashboards, and budget driver reports that share critical data, we enhanced transparency and accountability. Through strategic realignments across divisions, the department has continued to incorporate technology solutions into our approach to service. We have focused on strategies that maximize our resources, engage our municipal and community partners, and modernize crucial programs. Initiatives like Pulse Point, the embedded worker program within Law Enforcement, and the modernization of the youth shelter care program, provide innovative services that are both lifesaving and ensure safety throughout our community.

HHS continues to leverage our relationships to address critical needs within the community while addressing key health and safety issues. An example of this approach in action is the opening of an Emergency Shelter in January 2024 in response to the extreme winter weather. Equipped with training in emergency preparedness, our staff provided vital services during a power outage, protecting residents across Waukesha County. Other initiatives, like partnering with the Children's Court Improvement Program and the Emergency Protective Placement/Chapter 55 project, emphasize outreach efforts that involve key partners in creating collaborative community solutions together.

“The people here care, and they want to do the work to support their community. It’s one of the things that makes coming to work here so invigorating.”



An innovative shift to utilizing various media formats, has been a cornerstone in the department’s approach to connecting more effectively with our community. Throughout the year we have utilized video to showcase innovative programming, recruit staff, and educate the public on available services. This year’s annual report connects readers to our first-ever video version of this annual report, highlighting the year in review.

I wish to extend my gratitude for your continued support. Thus, it is with pride that I share with you the accomplishments of the dedicated staff of the Health and Human Services Department.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Aldred".

ELIZABETH ALDRED

Director, Department of Health & Human Services

**CHECK
OUT OUR
VIDEO
“YEAR IN
REVIEW”**



Leadership & Team Excellence

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES EXECUTIVE TEAM



Elizabeth Aldred

Director



Lisa Roberts

Deputy Director



Randy Setzer

Manager, Administrative Services



Mary Smith

Manager, Aging & Disability Resource Center



Dr. Ron Pupp

Manager, Child & Youth Coordinated Services



Penny Nevicosi

Manager, Child & Youth Family Services



Kirk Yauchler

Manager, Clinical Services



Sandra Masker

Manager, IT Business Application Support



Benjamin Jones

Manager, Public Health



Nicole Kelly

Public Communications Coordinator

At the core of Waukesha County's Department of Health & Human Services success is our incredible team of dedicated professionals who embody the spirit of care and commitment. Our workforce of more than 500 staff isn't just a group of employees; it is a community of passionate individuals who care deeply about each other and the residents we serve. It's this compassion and dedication that define us as exceptional.

In fostering a workplace where team members are truly valued, we ensure our staff can thrive and, in turn, provide outstanding service to the community. We understand that by empowering our team with resources, ongoing development, and a supportive environment, we're investing not just in their well-being, but in the future of Waukesha County as a whole. Together, we continue to build a vibrant, caring community committed to enhancing the quality of life for all.

By the Numbers: Celebrating Our Success

53,728

Visitors served at the Human Services Center front desk

170%

Increase in HHS LinkedIn page Followers

\$6M

Value of benefits accessed by clients with the help of ADRC Benefit Specialists

91%

HHS staff said they understand how their work directly contributes to the overall success of the County

85

Community partners connected to the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), collaborating to improve outcomes through the work of the three action teams

Strategic Milestones:

Achieving Our Vision for the Future

By actively engaging staff at all levels and across all divisions, we successfully achieved key milestones in our strategic plan, marking a year of significant progress and collaboration throughout the department.

Innovation Catalyst

- In collaboration with DOA-IT, we've created an application for workforce members to submit quality improvement ideas, complete with feedback loops and a department-wide dashboard for transparency.
- We're also forming a Quality Improvement Cross-Functional Steering Committee and developing training for staff on using the application and Lean-CI principles.

Leadership Development

- Designed a robust menu of core trainings to support new leaders throughout their first five years with HHS, ensuring they have the tools and knowledge needed to succeed.
- The training menu was developed through collaboration with established leaders, recent hires, and HR, incorporating diverse insights and experiences to enhance its effectiveness.

Resource Showcase

- The Informational Resource Fair served as a "one-stop shop" where every division demonstrated their unique services, providing an opportunity for staff to explore the extensive resources HHS offers.
- Due to the overwhelmingly positive reception, plans are underway to expand the showcase to include all county departments, promoting inter-departmental familiarity and collaboration across the entire campus.

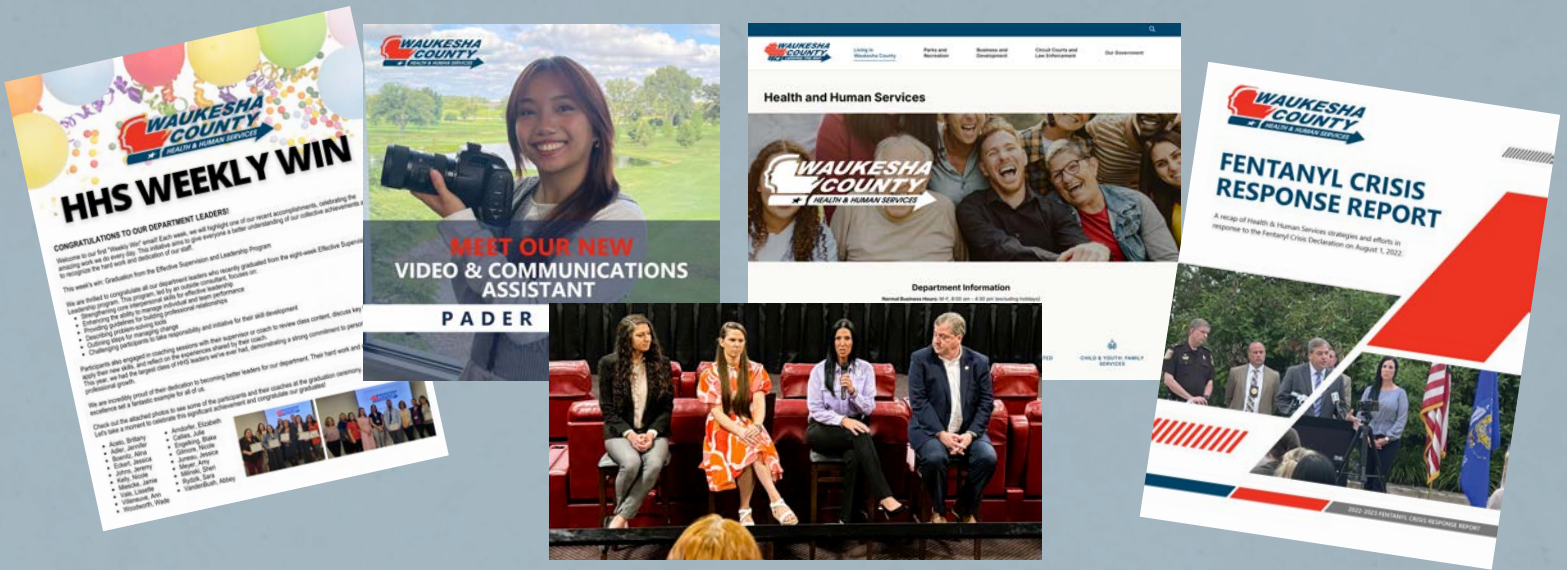
Plans Consistency

- The HHS Executive Team worked diligently to align division operational plans with the overarching department plan, reinforcing our goal of operating as one unified department.
- The standardized and aligned division plans for 2025 will be communicated department-wide to ensure transparency and unified action.

Community Needs

- Developed an evaluation and scoring tool to assess necessary decision-making components such as community impact, available resources, risk, and return on investment.
- The tool developed provides for the requisite due diligence to show that a new program or initiative has been objectively and strategically evaluated, but it also allows the user to compare scores among initiatives to gauge their relevance and importance.

COMMUNICATION



Connecting with Clarity: Waukesha County's 2024 Communication Triumphs

In 2024, HHS blazed new trails in communication, ensuring openness, engagement, and connection with the community. Through innovative strategies and impactful storytelling, the county demonstrated its commitment to keeping the public informed. Here are a few examples:

A Bold Stand Against the Fentanyl Crisis
Waukesha County tackled the fentanyl crisis head-on with its inaugural Fentanyl Crisis Response Report. The report provided a transparent view of Opioid Settlement Fund utilization, highlighting data-driven decision-making as pivotal in battling this epidemic.

The county's openness extended into the community through collaborations with the Heroin Task Force, local events, and partner agencies delivering prevention and harm reduction services. This effort not only informed the public but fortified community trust.

Celebrating Success Stories Weekly
To foster connection, HHS introduced "Weekly Wins," a series of emails that brought success stories straight to staff inboxes. Each week celebrated client victories, innovative solutions, standout collaborations, and employee recognition. The initiative resonated with staff and the HHS Board, nurturing team spirit and aligning everyone with the county's mission.

Capturing Moments on Camera
Recognizing the power of visual storytelling, HHS expanded its video communication efforts. The addition of a Video Assistant from UW-Milwaukee enabled the creation of dynamic content such as recruiting "Day in the Life" videos and departmental showcases for ADRC and Public Health. These visuals offered fresh insights into county operations and served as a vital recruitment tool.

Showcasing the Fentanyl Crisis Impact
Heartfelt narratives were at the forefront of a poignant video series depicting the fentanyl crisis's impact on the Waukesha County community. The series touched on parents' loss, recovery testimonies, frontline heroism, and countywide efforts. Premiered at Marcus Majestic Theater, the event provided a powerful platform for dialogue among elected officials and stakeholders, fostering a deeper understanding of the crisis.

A New Era of Digital Engagement
Looking forward to 2025, the launch of a revamped county website promises swift access to essential information. Redesigned for accessibility and user-friendliness, it combines intuitive search capabilities with modern aesthetics, ensuring that every community member can navigate the site with ease.

In 2024, the department's commitment to communication went beyond mere exchange of information — it facilitated engagement that drew the community closer. These efforts not only paint a picture of progress but also chart a course for future initiatives, grounding all actions in the spirit of community.

"With the new orientation process, I have peace of mind knowing that our new employees receive all the necessary information while simultaneously building meaningful connections. It's a game-changer for our team's productivity and morale."

- HHS Supervisor



Streamlined Beginnings: Enhancing New Employee Onboarding

Effective communication forms the cornerstone of successful employee integration at HHS, ensuring new hires feel supported from their first day. Recognizing gaps in previous onboarding processes, recent improvements focus on delivering consistent, clear guidance and a warm welcome to every newcomer.

Feedback from staff indicated inconsistencies in supervisor-led onboarding, including challenges with direct deposit, tax filing setup, and a lack of introduction to essential county resources like the intranet. Additionally, the decentralized process for obtaining badges made newcomers feel isolated. By revamping the approach to a comprehensive, supportive structure, we've transformed the onboarding journey, creating a more efficient and effective process for everyone.



The first day now kicks off with a warm welcome from our Director and Deputy Director, providing a personal connection to our mission, vision, and values. IT support is seamlessly integrated, assisting with computer setup and accounts, ensuring everyone has access to what they need on day one. This proactive approach aligns with our commitment to starting each staff member off on the right foot.

The day includes:

- Access to IT services for account and hardware setup.
- Detailed HR policies overview and essential system walkthroughs like Highline and Intellitime.
- Guidance on submitting direct deposit and tax details, emergency contact information, and AlertSense enrollment.
- Orientation regarding essential topics including HHS policies, internal committees and strategic initiatives, and response protocols to phishing and various emergency situations.
- Introduction to the new workforce orientation form, setting clear expectations for future steps, such as the county's benefits orientation.
- A comprehensive tour of HHS facilities, ensuring familiarity with the workspace and key locations.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Supervisors value the relief of shared onboarding responsibilities and appreciate having staff laptops ready to go from day one. Rehired employees commend the newfound organization and welcoming environment as a significant improvement from previous experiences.

New employees leave with enthusiasm, as reflected in survey feedback praising the session's organization and warmth. Survey comments highlight the remarkable contributions of speakers and the effective communication throughout the day. Additionally, the inclusion of practical resources like building maps further exemplifies our commitment to a supportive and efficient onboarding process.

By centralizing all relevant information and training into a cohesive, well-structured program, we reduce redundancy and eliminate unnecessary delays. This ensures that new staff quickly acclimate to their roles, enabling them to start contributing to their teams and the community sooner. With clearer expectations and resources at their fingertips, new employees can seamlessly transition into their positions, maximizing their productivity and aligning swiftly with departmental goals.

Efficiency & Cost Savings

Building Success: Mental Health Center's Revamp Transforms Care

In response to evolving mental health challenges, Waukesha County has fundamentally transformed its care model, seamlessly blending efficiency with compassionate service to better meet the community's needs. Through the strategic redesign of its Mental Health Center, HHS has not only enhanced the efficacy of care but has also set a new benchmark for holistic, community-focused mental health services.

Introducing the Crisis Resource Center

In 2023, HHS embarked on a transformative journey to enhance its mental health services by converting half of the inpatient hospital into the Crisis Resource Center (CRC). Officially opened on January 30, 2024, the CRC offers a safe environment for adults experiencing acute mental health crises, providing short-term, voluntary therapeutic interventions. With a focus on stabilization and support, the CRC supports those needing immediate care to safely transition back into the community. In 2024 alone, the CRC reported 188 admissions, underscoring its essential role.

A testament to the CRC's impact is the story of a 38-year-old client who was habitually treated in the ER due to unstable medication and housing. At the CRC, they found stability, began medication management, and connected with the Community Support Program, eventually achieving stable housing. This success reduced ER visits and lessened the strain on local healthcare resources.

“Thank you for giving me a safe place to get back on my feet. The CRC helped in giving me back my life.” - CRC Guest

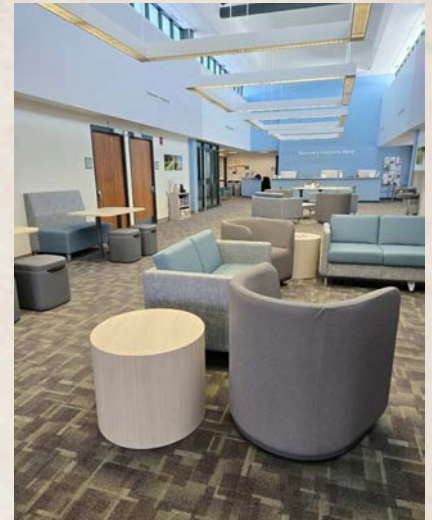
Enhancements in Inpatient Care

The redesign efforts included increasing inpatient capacity from 14 to 16 beds. This expansion was vital in reducing dependence on state mental health hospital care, keeping patients closer to home while significantly underspending our budget for state facilities. Because of these changes, the Mental Health Center operated under budget in 2024, showcasing both fiscal prudence and efficient resource allocation.

Centralizing Crisis Services for Collaborative Excellence

Further enhancing efficiency, Crisis Services were relocated to the Mental Health Center in March 2024. This strategic move brought 24/7 services under one roof, enabling real-time, in-person collaboration among teams. The centralized setup optimizes space utilization and fosters seamless communication, resulting in improved outcomes for those seeking mental health interventions.

The redesign of Waukesha County's Mental Health Center illustrates a forward-thinking approach to community health—one that prioritizes patient-centered care, operational efficiency, and fiscal responsibility. By aligning resources with community needs, the center not only offers better support to individuals in crisis but also realizes significant cost savings and operational improvements. As the model evolves, it serves as an example of innovative care and resourcefulness for communities statewide.



Efficient Outcomes: Strategic Advances in HHS Operations

As HHS commits to refining its processes and maximizing resource utilization, several key projects have spotlighted significant advancements in efficiency and cost savings. These initiatives highlight our collective drive for operational excellence and service enhancement.

Streamlined Collections and Bad Address Resolutions

With the rise of high-deductible health plans, HHS took decisive action to refine its client collections strategy. To bolster internal efficiency, the collections process underwent an overhaul, optimizing data retrieval via integrated filters and qualifiers. This improvement saved approximately 10 minutes per client account by eliminating four manual steps. By documenting workflows and enhancing data uploads, our collections unit within the Administrative Services division achieved a successful referral of \$1,800,000 to collections, while supporting individuals with options to pay for services over time.

Efficient Redesigns in Administration and Child Welfare

The HHS child welfare programs underwent strategic changes to align with State of Wisconsin standards, restructuring into Child & Youth: Family Services and Child & Youth: Coordinated Services. This change consolidates State DCF programs in Family Services and DHS programs in Coordinated Services, streamlining care for clients in multiple programs, reducing confusion, and improving service delivery.

Simultaneously, the Administrative Services Division underwent a crucial reorganization targeting the Revenue Cycle, Fiscal, and Administrative Support units. This redesign enhances clear process flows and team cohesion to address increasing service demands and workload challenges. By aligning resources, it supports better fiscal analysis and real-time financial reviews, laying a solid foundation for further success.



Piloting Benefits Navigation

To aid uninsured clients in the outpatient mental health clinic, a Benefits Navigator pilot was initiated in late 2024. This position ensures uninsured clients receive support in applying for Medicaid, thereby increasing service reimbursement potential. The pilot's success prompted the hiring of a contracted Benefits Navigator through NAMI in 2025, to improve insurance and benefit enrollment. This ensures clients receive necessary coverage and that HHS is properly compensated for its services.

Through these strategic endeavors, Waukesha County continues to demonstrate its commitment to efficient, responsive, and resource-conscious public service. By optimizing processes and fostering innovation, we not only maximize cost savings but also enhance the quality of care and service delivery to our community.

Volunteer Services

In 2024, our dedicated volunteers provided an astounding 32,958 hours of service across numerous programs including AODA support, Home Delivered Meals and office assistance, a testament to their commitment to the well-being of our community. The estimated cost savings realized through this volunteer time exceeded one million dollars, illustrating the profound financial efficiency achieved by strategically incorporating volunteers into our service delivery model.

"The Benefits Navigator is an essential addition, bridging gaps for clients who lack insurance coverage. It empowers those we serve with access to vital healthcare benefits.

While it also enhances our reimbursement processes at HHS, the real impact lies in supporting our clients through every step of their healthcare journey, which ultimately transforms lives."

ETHICS & DIVERSITY

Redefining Emergency Care: A Collaborative Approach to Protective Placements

In the face of a growing number of Emergency Protective Placements (EPPs) placing undue strain on a single community hospital, HHS took proactive steps to transform the system with the help of local partners. Historically, Waukesha County experienced approximately 50 EPPs per year, highlighting an urgent need for systemic change to alleviate financial and operational pressure on overwhelmed facilities.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) spearheaded this transformation with a groundbreaking partnership involving four major hospital systems—ProHealth Care, Inc., Aurora, Froedtert, and Ascension. The collaboration began in December 2023 with the objective of redistributing EPP responsibilities and enhancing the decision-making process around protective placements. A key strategy involved encouraging law enforcement to contact the HHS Crisis Line to determine the most appropriate medical facility for individuals in crisis, ensuring they received care either in their medical home or at the nearest hospital.

Through targeted outreach, HHS engaged with 26 law enforcement jurisdictions to roll out this new protocol. Emphasizing collaboration, HHS saw overwhelming cooperation and commitment from law enforcement, resulting in a significant reduction of EPPs. The incidence of Chapter 55 placements decreased from 47 in 2023 to 28 in 2024—a 40.4% reduction. This more balanced approach not only improved care appropriateness but also relieved pressure on any single hospital, promoting a sustainable and equitable system of care.



"Through genuine collaboration with local hospitals and law enforcement, we've built a system that's not only more efficient but truly prioritizes the well-being of individuals in crisis." — Mary Smith, ADRC Manager

Building on the initial success, the second phase commenced in August 2024. Law enforcement agencies were encouraged to refer high-risk individuals to the ADRC, where a proactive, face-to-face assessment was conducted by an Adult Protective Services worker and ADRC Specialist. This early intervention strategy aimed to address potential risks before they escalated, resulting in 24 successful outreach visits that provided essential services and mitigated further interactions with law enforcement.

This project showcases the transformative power of collaboration and offers valuable insights into effective public-private partnerships. By fostering open communication, mutual respect, and task decentralization, Waukesha County HHS and its partners successfully redefined emergency care, providing a blueprint for other counties seeking enhanced service delivery and community well-being.

Embracing Inclusion and Integrity

At HHS, our commitment to ethics and diversity serves as a foundation for all our initiatives. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and integrity, we strive to ensure that our services meet the evolving needs of a diverse community. Our recent efforts span across various programs, each dedicated to celebrating diversity, promoting equity, and providing ethical support to those we serve. From empowering young professionals to breaking language barriers in health education, we are driven by a mission to create a just and supportive environment for everyone.




Young Professionals ERG: Empowering Emerging Leaders

Waukesha County HHS expanded its commitment to employee development with the launch of the Young Professionals Employee Resource Group (ERG) in late 2024. Known as YoPros, this ERG is designed to connect and empower young (and young at heart) professionals within the department. Offering opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and professional networking, YoPros aligns with the County's passion for nurturing talent and enhancing the potential of our staff across the organization.

Accessible Care for Our Heroes

March 2024 saw the opening of the Community-Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) in Oconomowoc, offering primary, urgent, mental health, and women's health services to veterans closer to home. Addressing transportation challenges for older veterans reluctant to drive to the Milwaukee VA Hospital, the CBOC provides essential care services within the region. The clinic now serves as an excellent referral source for our Veterans Services Office, and future plans include onsite office hours for our staff to further support veteran health care needs meaningfully and conveniently.

Our ongoing journey to enhance ethics and diversity is one of continual growth and proactive engagement. As we implement and expand these programs, we remain dedicated to being an organization that reflects and respects the vibrant diversity of our community. By prioritizing equitable access, authentic connections, and ethical service delivery, HHS aims to set a standard that others can follow — ensuring every individual feels valued and represented in our mission to serve.



Waukesha County HHS
YOPROS

FAQ

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| What is YoPros? | The Waukesha County HHS Young Professionals (YoPros) is an Employee Resource Group dedicated to connecting and empowering the young (and young at heart) professionals in Waukesha County! |
| Who can join? | All LTE, FTE, and contract HHS employees who want to build connections and develop professionally. |
| When are events? | Usually about once a month, mostly during the lunch hour. But sometimes, we'll mix it up with a special off-site event! |
| How do I join? | Easy! Click here to join our YoPros listserv or email Mark at mwickstrom@waukeshacounty.gov for more info! |

Join us! We promise networking isn't as awkward as a middle school dance.

Spanish Naloxone Trainings: Breaking Language Barriers in Opioid Education

In 2024, HHS enhanced its naloxone training offerings by incorporating Spanish language support at the Waukesha Alano Club. By adding a Spanish translator and providing bilingual naloxone kits in vending machines, accessibility to life-saving resources has significantly increased.

Additionally, in partnership with ProHealth Care's Hispanic Resource Center, HHS now offers opioid education and naloxone trainings taught in Spanish on a monthly basis, ensuring broader community reach and participation.

Revertir una sobredosis de opioides con Naloxona



ACOSTAR

Intenta despertar a la persona
Acueste a la persona boca arriba
e incline su cabeza hacia atrás



ROCIAR

Inserte el dispositivo de aerosol
nasal de naloxona en una fosa nasal
Presione el émbolo



QUEDAR

Llama al 911 y da su ubicación
Dé respiraciones de rescate,
repetir **ROCIAR** cada 2-3 minutos

Innovation

Innovative Mobility: Empowering Independence in Waukesha County

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Waukesha County has unveiled a transformative pilot program that leverages grant funding to enhance mobility and independence for residents using electric wheelchairs or scooters. By focusing on vehicle modifications, the initiative specifically benefits those 60 and older and individuals aged 18-59 with disabilities, addressing core transportation challenges.

Partnering with licensed professionals, the ADRC tailored personalized vehicle modification plans to the unique needs of each participant, enabling them to travel with greater ease and independence. Over a brief three-month period, the program successfully assisted 18 residents, delivering remarkable improvements in their quality of life and daily activities.

The community response has been overwhelmingly positive. One participant expressed immense gratitude for the scooter lift funded by the program, which enabled her to enjoy a day out with family—a joyous experience she hadn't had for years.

"My husband and I want to thank you and The Aging and Disability Center of Waukesha County for the super fantastic grant we received for the scooter lift for our car! We have been getting out more now since the scooter is available to us!"

Another participant shared how attending her granddaughter's soccer games was once a daunting challenge due to her mobility constraints, but thanks to a new vehicle lift, she now comfortably attends and cheers from the sidelines.

These community stories underscore the significant positive impact these modifications have had, facilitating new freedoms and strengthening familial bonds. The ADRC remains committed to expanding such innovative efforts, striving for an inclusive community that champions accessibility and the independence of all its residents, while reducing reliance on other county transportation programs.



define

measure

analyze

improve

control

CQI Initiative: Driving Quality Improvement

In 2024, the hiring of a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Coordinator marked a new era for the department, steering over 30 project ideas identified by our leadership. The Coordinator streamlined quality assurance efforts, building a structured approach that empowers staff to identify and solve departmental challenges. By centralizing these efforts, we are reaching solutions more efficiently, enhancing our overall effectiveness.

PulsePoint: Innovating Emergency Response

In 2024, Waukesha County proudly launched the PulsePoint app, a groundbreaking tool that transforms emergency response. In partnership with the 911 Communications Center and local first responders, this app mobilizes CPR-trained citizens to aid during cardiac emergencies and maintains a real-time AED registry. By keeping the community informed and involved, PulsePoint significantly boosts emergency preparedness and response.

Overdose Fatality Review: A Collaborative Approach

As Wisconsin's 26th Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) site, Waukesha County adopted a multi-sector strategy to combat the opioid crisis. With 70 members from 21 agencies, the OFR generated 78 recommendations in 2024 to mend system gaps, after analyzing fatalities. Led by a licensed social worker, the program integrates bereavement outreach, while reducing stigma and enhancing trauma-responsive care. The team's findings are shaping policy and funding priorities.



"In Waukesha County, we are committed to leveraging every available tool to support and protect our community," Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow said. "The launch of PulsePoint is a significant step forward in our efforts to save lives."

Budget Driver Reports

Beginning with the first monthly cost driver dashboard in 2023, our budget driver reports have expanded to monitor key programs like the MHC hospital and CRC. The reports support comprehensive fiscal oversight across several divisions. This innovation enables leadership to optimize financial management and strategic planning, while accurately tracking expenses against budget targets.

Project Elevate: Empowering Families

Launched in July 2024, Project Elevate supports families through proactive prevention. This wraparound initiative partners with programs like Birth-to-Three and Safe Babies Healthy Families, fostering resilience by connecting families to needed resources before challenges intensify. With four families already engaged and strengthening through tailored goals, Project Elevate exemplifies a future-focused commitment to family empowerment and community collaboration.



Teamwork & Collaboration

Collaborative Solutions: Transforming Lives Through Teamwork

HHS's Adult and Youth Triage Models, introduced in late 2023 and early 2024, are redefining how complex cases are handled. By leveraging cross-divisional teams, these models enhance service delivery and client outcomes.

Adult Triage Model: Streamlining Support

Launched in January 2024, the Adult Triage Consultation Model brought together leaders from Clinical Services, Crisis Services, ADRC, Adult Protective Services, Economic Support, Veterans, and Public Health. Together, they tackled 18 challenging cases. This collaborative model ensures each situation receives at least five connections or resources to be explored, including a potential multi-disciplinary team response. The consultation process creates an opportunity to join together, across divisions, to access resources to support clients in innovative ways.



Youth Triage Model: A Success Story of Collaboration

Our Youth Triage Model illustrates the profound impact of teamwork. In a remarkable success story, collaborative efforts across divisions helped secure a Level 5 foster home placement for a 16-year-old with exceptional needs.

This arrangement enables the youth to receive specialized care within a supportive community, circumventing the necessity for residential placement. The journey involved navigating various systems—Child Protective Services, Youth Justice, Children's Long Term Support program, and Mental Health Crisis, among others—and required a unified approach.

Frequent triage meetings and collective advocacy brought to light the agency's core values of Collaboration and Respect. Today, the youth thrives in a loving and secure environment, proudly reaching a personal milestone by obtaining a part-time job—an achievement that epitomizes their determination and the positive impact of unified support.

These triage efforts not only transform lives but also underscore HHS's commitment to community and collaboration. By working together, we ensure that every individual receives the support necessary to flourish, proving that our collective impact is far greater than the sum of our individual parts.

Heroin Task Force: Driving Change

The Heroin Task Force has made remarkable strides across several action teams in their ongoing efforts against opioid misuse. The Stigma Reduction Action Team secured a \$10,000 grant from HHS to launch a social media campaign, creating a LinkedIn page to disseminate stigma-reduction content. The Support Recovery Action Team and Metrics and Measurement, led by passionate HHS leaders, are working together to launch a groundbreaking community survey. Additionally, the CHIP Substance Use Team introduced the "All Peer Program," offering vital peer support services through a new drop-in center for residents with opioid use disorder or mental health needs, funded partially through a CHIP ARPA grant.

Truancy Program: Pioneering Early Intervention

The School Justice Partnership (SJP) Pilot Program is an innovative collaboration between Health and Human Services and two local school districts grappling with chronic absenteeism in intermediate grades. By prioritizing early, holistic support and interventions, the program seeks to improve student attendance and behavior, reducing reliance on Youth Justice systems, a measure shown to exacerbate truancy. This initiative involved detailed consultations with county and school leaders to transition to an effective, school-led model. This approach emphasizes proactive community engagement over punitive measures, notably decreasing the number of truancy situations managed by HHS.

CHIP ARPA Grants: Catalyzing Community Health

In 2024, Waukesha County Public Health made significant strides towards enhancing community wellness through the strategic allocation of \$300,000 in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding. By collaborating with seven local organizations, this initiative addressed critical health focus areas: supporting older adults, aiding recovery from substance use, and increasing mental health resources for youth. This effort aligns with our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), aiming to make Waukesha County a healthier and more supportive environment for all residents.

Funded Initiatives:

- **City of Waukesha:** Expanded Ballroom Basics to boost balance and social interaction among seniors.
- **Eras Senior Network:** Fostered social connections for adults 60+ through telephone outreach and intergenerational programs.
- **University of Wisconsin System:** Enhanced StrongBodies, a proven fall-prevention initiative.
- **La Casa de Esperanza:** Bolstered intergenerational relationships via the Seniors and Scholars program, linking middle schoolers with seniors.
- **Aurora Health Care:** Aided the Waukesha County Falls Prevention Coalition in providing educational and preventive services.
- **Wisconsin Community Services (WCS):** Tackled stigma and broadened evidence-based peer support for individuals in substance use recovery.
- **NAMI:** Advanced youth mental health education through Ending the Silence, The Lighthouse Project, and 9-8-8 awareness campaigns.

By supporting these transformative programs, Waukesha County Public Health not only strengthens individual well-being but also forges a more resilient, interconnected community. Through strategic partnerships and focused funding, we drive lasting change, highlighting the power of collaborative efforts in advancing public health.



Enhancing Collaboration Through Comprehensive Reviews

In 2024, the Collaborative Review team made significant strides in fostering cross-divisional integration. Conducting eight thorough reviews across multiple divisions the team laid the groundwork for a more cohesive and efficient operational framework. The team consists of 14 reviewers, who each played a crucial role in these achievements, enriching the team's efforts with fresh perspectives and expertise.

The core of Collaborative Review involves creating a united framework where different perspectives contribute to identification of systems-level issues and recommended changes. Tools, like an informative one-pager and a System Mapping Orientation PowerPoint, have increased stakeholder awareness, de-mystifying the review process and illustrating the benefits of this systems-level approach.

Innovative developments include the creation of a System Analysis Tool, offering high-level thematic considerations that empower HHS to make informed, data-driven decisions. Streamlining how recommendations are shared further integrates insights across the department, ensuring continuity and transparency.

Looking ahead, continuous enhancement of tools and expanding training for reviewers will strengthen the process. By refining stakeholder feedback mechanisms, the Collaborative Review team will continue to uphold its role as a catalyst for cross-divisional integration and quality improvement, ultimately benefiting the programs we provide and the community we serve.

Well-Being

Boosting Foster Care Awareness

Community well-being is the cornerstone of our mission, driving every initiative and guiding us as we work tirelessly to ensure that everyone, especially our most vulnerable members, is supported and empowered to thrive.

Ensuring the well-being of our children sometimes means finding them safe, loving homes through our Foster Care system. Even in our community, there's a pressing need for more foster homes. Addressing common misconceptions and raising awareness is key, and in 2024, we intensified our outreach efforts to expand our foster care network through the use of ARPA funding.

Social Media and Coffee Sleeve Campaigns

Our focused dedication resulted in three strategic partnerships for a coffee sleeve campaign with Vintage Grounds, Loca Latte, and Birch & Banyan. A data-driven approach identified areas with the highest need, distributing 2,000 coffee sleeves that not only boosted community partnerships but also amplified our social media presence. The campaign effectively reached and engaged potential foster families in these high-need areas.

Successful Yard Sign and Bus Campaigns

Our yard sign campaign significantly increased visibility in 2024, placing 215 signs across the county, with active support from staff across the County. This effort generated 72 QR code scans and countless community exposures over five months. Additionally, we ran advertising on the back of local buses from August to December, further enhancing our visibility. Many attendees at foster care informational sessions mentioned these signs and bus ads as their primary motivators for attending.

Community Engagement at Local Events

Our recruitment strategies extended to impactful local events, including the Apple Harvest Festival at Retzer Nature Center, Waukesha Night Out, and Oconomowoc Kid's Fest. Custom flyers displayed in parks facilitated additional engagement, yielding QR code scans and increased attendance at our sessions.

Future Plans

We have positioned ourselves to continue successful recruitment campaigns through 2025. Plans include maintaining coffee sleeve partnerships and launching a "mini" yard sign campaign during foster care month in May. We have also established a Content Creation Team composed of staff dedicated to strategically planning and executing outreach efforts throughout the year. This dynamic team will ensure our efforts remain impactful, fostering deeper community engagement and increasing our capacity to provide safe homes for children in need.



“I had considered becoming a foster parent for years, and then I saw one of the yard signs and finally took the first step.”

Enhancing Safety and Support Through Community Initiatives

New Youth Shelter Care Vendor: Laying the Foundation for Safe, Healing Spaces

In preparation for a seamless transition to a new shelter care provider by July 1, 2025, HHS has partnered with Norris, Inc., a renowned organization committed to transforming lives through healing connections. In 2024, groundwork was established to support renovations of a welcoming, trauma-informed facility designed specifically for youth needing temporary care.

This new space features separate accommodations for males and females, with six rooms each, and it will be licensed for ages 10-18. The services offered will include a full-time therapist for individual and family counseling, psychiatric consultations, recreational therapy, and on-site public school resources—services previously unavailable through earlier providers. By forming strong partnerships with providers like Norris, Inc., we are better equipped to adapt and respond to the evolving needs of our community, ensuring that every youth has access to a safe environment that also supports their overall well-being.



Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) in the Jail: Reducing Harm, Saving Lives

HHS partnered with the Waukesha County Jail to embrace a comprehensive approach to opioid use disorder treatment by successfully implementing the first phase of our MOUD program. By maintaining existing MOUD treatments for incoming clients, an average of 30 unique inmates per month benefit from continued access to essential treatments. The program is now progressing toward Phase 2, where new inductions onto MOUD will be explored for qualifying inmates.

To further enhance harm reduction, HHS has assisted with the implementation of naloxone training and provision of naloxone for discharging inmates, with a goal of reducing post-release overdoses. Programs like these aim to curb substance-related fatalities by acknowledging and addressing the heightened risk of overdose upon release, thereby saving lives and improving community health outcomes.



Emergency Preparedness: Building Resilience Through Community Collaboration

Emergency preparedness remains a core focus for HHS. In 2024, our Preparedness Team expanded the community's resilience against potential threats through updated emergency response plans and real-world exercises.

Planning and strategic training opportunities for partners on threats such as biological or radiological events underscore our proactive commitment. Reinforcing this commitment, HHS introduced a new preparedness structure that integrates emergency readiness into daily operations, fortifying our ability to address future health emergencies effectively.

Highlighting our readiness to serve, HHS, in partnership with the Red Cross, HAWS and other partners, provided temporary shelter at the Waukesha County Expo Center during a severe winter storm in January. This initiative ensured that impacted Waukesha County residents remained safe and comfortable during prolonged power outages.



Heartfelt Stories: Transformations and Gratitude



A Lifeline in Crisis – Waukesha County’s Mental Health Response

In 2024, HHS continued to expand our innovative collaboration to improve mental health crisis response by placing a Crisis Counselor at Waukesha County Communications (WCC) dispatch. This partnership ensures faster intervention and better support for those in crisis.

One family’s experience highlights its impact. A parent, struggling to help their child through a mental health crisis, initially called the police. Officers responded but, finding no immediate danger, left after providing recommendations. Still seeking help, the parent searched online and called the Crisis Response Unit. The call was directed to WCC, where a telecommunicator recognized the need for a mental health response and engaged the on-site HHS Crisis Counselor.

A team of HHS Crisis Clinicians visited the home, providing immediate support and guidance. Their approach made the child feel safe, and their support helped the family take clear steps toward treatment.

Reflecting on the experience, the parent shared, “It was a complete 180 in the positive direction. The Crisis team coming to our house made all the difference.”



A Veteran’s Gratitude

“Thank you very much for your help and genuine concern during our visit. As a fellow veteran I am fully certain you can appreciate the circumstance. The process is exhausting, especially while trying to sort out very serious personal problems. God bless you and the work that you do. I did not at all expect you to help in the fashion you did today—I have great respect for you, your service, and what you do for veterans.”



A Path to Healing – How CST Transformed a Family’s Journey

A middle school student struggled to express their feelings and felt unheard by their parents. Their family, fearing for the teen’s well-being, worried they might need hospitalization but didn’t know where to turn.

That’s when Waukesha County’s Coordinated Services Team (CST) stepped in. A CST worker provided the youth with support tailored to their needs—helping the youth develop communication skills, offering a listening ear, and guiding them through conflict resolution. More than that, CST brought together a team of professionals to ensure the teen had a strong network of support.

By meeting them where they felt most comfortable, CST helped the youth and their family rebuild their relationship. Over time, the youth gained confidence, learned to express their needs, and strengthened their bond with their parents. Today, they have graduated from the program, and they are living independently, pursuing her dreams.

Nourishment and Independence: A Grateful Heart

“Thank you so much for bringing me meals. It makes it possible to continue to live in my home. I will celebrate my 99th birthday in a few months and I have lived in my home for sixty five years. This program is such a blessing. Rain or shine the volunteers are always cheerful and I appreciate everything they do for me.”

- A thank you note from a Meals on Wheels consumer to the volunteers who deliver the meals.



From Crisis to Stability: A Journey of Transformation

A 9-year-old child and their family faced overwhelming challenges, initially considering residential care as their only option due to the child's complex needs. Our teams provided extensive resources like lock boxes, wall padding, door alarms, respite care, art therapy, skills development, and psychoeducation to bolster family resilience and client stability.

The results of their journey have been truly remarkable. The family saw a dramatic decrease in crisis calls, with no recent law enforcement involvement, and the prevention of further inpatient hospitalizations. Active participation from the family has been key, as they express gratitude and satisfaction with the positive changes and support received.

The collaborative efforts of HHS and the family have turned a critical situation into a stable, nurturing environment, showcasing the power of integrated support and the unwavering dedication of our staff.



Reunited and Supported – A Youth Justice Success Story

A 15-year-old with a genetic condition and mental health challenges faced difficulties at home, leading to involvement with the youth justice system and multiple out-of-home placements. With five pending delinquency charges and concerns from the district attorney's office about the youth's return home, the path forward seemed uncertain.

Determined to support the youth and their family, a Waukesha County Youth Justice worker led the effort to create a plan for reunification. Working across the department, services were put in place that involved mental health, case management, counseling and mentoring for the youth and family.



In late 2024, the youth was successfully reunited with family. Wraparound services, weekly family team meetings, and strong partnerships with law enforcement and school officials have provided the ongoing support needed for a smooth transition.

Progress has been steady, with psychoeducation for the parents playing a vital role in the family's success. This story is a powerful example of how dedication and collaboration can create lasting positive change for youth and families in our community.

Honors and Accolades: Celebrating Excellence in Service

Child Welfare ARPA: Championing Community Change

Waukesha County's Child Welfare team proudly received the Wisconsin Children's System of Care Champion Award, an accolade that acknowledges their groundbreaking work in 2024. Utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, the team has successfully addressed critical service gaps, enhancing community services in profound ways. Over the past year, their efforts have empowered more than 100 families through innovative trauma-informed care initiatives and support systems. This award is a powerful testament to their commitment to fostering a thriving, supportive community environment, proving once again that dedicated service can create sustainable, positive change. We are immensely proud of our Child Welfare team for their dedication and the bright future they are shaping for Waukesha County.



Fentanyl Videos Award Finalist: Stories That Save

Our Fentanyl Video Series garnered significant attention as one of three finalists for the prestigious National Information Officers Association award for Best Use of Video. This recognition, despite not clinching the top spot, significantly heightened awareness around the opioid crisis and underscored the critical role of sharing personal stories to reduce stigma around substance use. The series is a poignant tribute to the brave individuals who shared their narratives—parents grieving the loss of children, individuals in recovery, and frontline workers tirelessly saving lives. Through their stories, we highlight the community's resilience and commitment to tackling this crisis head-on, showcasing the power of communication in promoting change and understanding.

Customer Satisfaction Success: Raising the Bar

In 2024, Health and Human Services achieved an overall customer satisfaction score of 4.71, surpassing our 2023 performance and the county's benchmark for a second consecutive year. This continual improvement reflects our department's dedication to excellence in customer service. Each client interaction is approached with utmost importance and care, whether face-to-face, over the phone, or through written communications, ensuring that every individual's needs are prioritized. By fostering positive and supportive experiences for residents, HHS solidifies our vision for the community we serve.





Celebrating Dedication: PATHS to Success Award

Michelle Montez's recognition with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families PATHS to Success Award underscores her exceptional dedication to youth in foster care. Nominated by a youth she personally supported, Michelle was honored during the Foster Care Youth Graduation celebration, making the award profoundly meaningful. This marks her second win in three years, reflecting her consistent impact and the deep trust and confidence placed in her by those she serves. Her tireless work, driven by genuine care and commitment, continues to inspire her colleagues at HHS, reinforcing our dedication to making a tangible difference in the lives of the people we serve.

988 Grant Award: Enhancing Crisis Services

Waukesha County distinguished itself amongst state agencies by securing a \$200,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to enhance our collaboration with the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline. This prestigious grant, awarded to only five agencies within Wisconsin, allows us to amplify the promotion of the 988 Lifeline as an essential "Someone to Talk to" resource for those experiencing mental health crises. It also supports technological upgrades for our 911 system and equips crisis team members with tablets or similar devices to track real-time locations, enhancing safety and data collection. These improvements bolster our in-person response capabilities, positioning us to deliver comprehensive, face-to-face mental health support for individuals in critical need.



Conference Presentations: Leading the Way

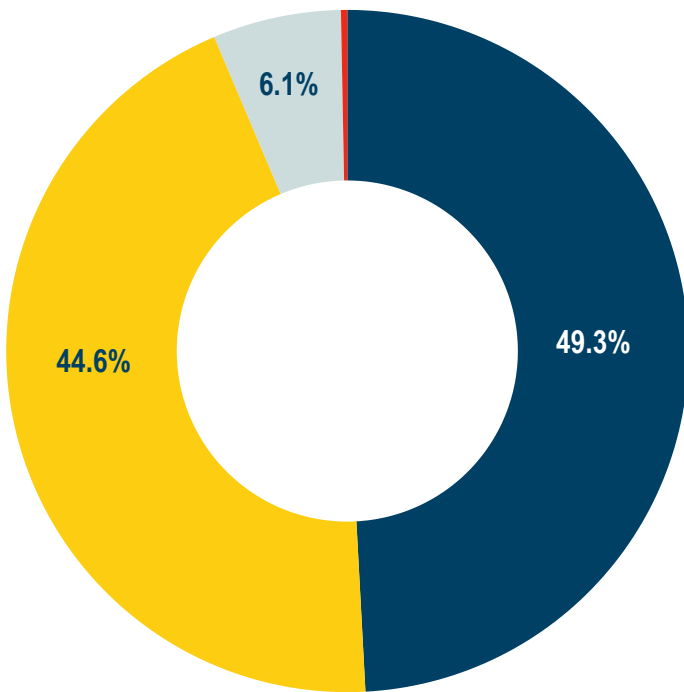
Our department's dedication to innovation and leadership was showcased through numerous conference presentations across Wisconsin in 2024. Our staff were invited to share insights on a variety of cutting-edge initiatives. Highlighted topics included the successful Embedded Crisis Intervention Collaboration between our Communications Center and Crisis Services Team, innovative strategies for handling Child Protective Services cases involving domestic violence, and the development of Residential Treatment Partnerships tailored to meet diverse youth needs. These presentations not only affirm our commitment to leading statewide efforts in public service but also facilitate the sharing of best practices and collaborative strategies with peers, further enhancing our impact and reach.



2025 Adopted Budget (by Major Program Area)

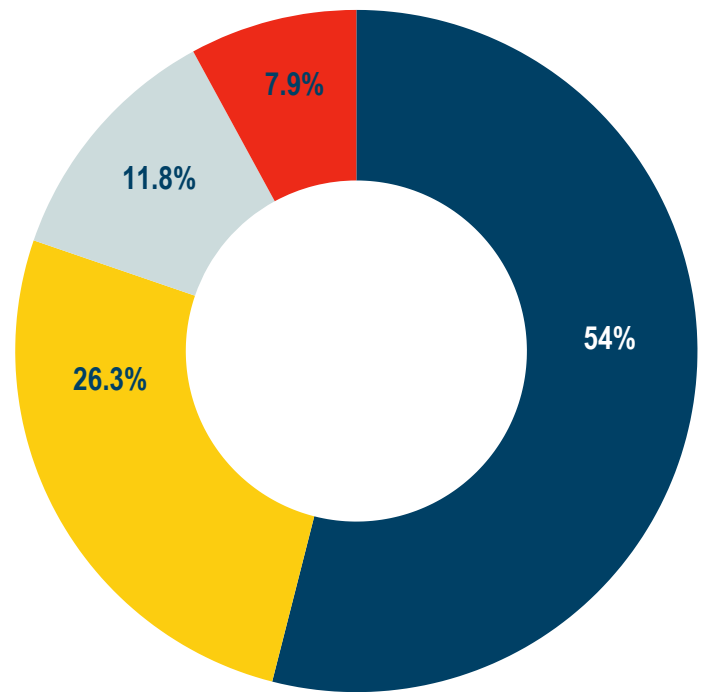
| | |
|---|----------------------|
| ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES..... | \$10,738,267 |
| ECONOMIC SUPPORT SERVICES..... | \$4,198,402 |
| AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER..... | \$13,174,320 |
| CHILD & YOUTH: COORDINATED SERVICES..... | \$27,958,857 |
| CHILD & YOUTH: FAMILY SERVICES..... | \$16,438,473 |
| CLINICAL SERVICES..... | \$23,321,600 |
| MENTAL HEALTH CENTER..... | \$6,798,448 |
| CRIMINAL JUSTICE COLLABORATING COUNCIL..... | \$1,967,455 |
| PUBLIC HEALTH..... | \$3,677,026 |
| VETERANS SERVICES..... | \$516,262 |
| <hr/> | |
| TOTAL | \$108,789,110 |

2025 BUDGETED EXPENSES



- OPERATING EXPENSES: \$53,624,719
- PERSONNEL EXPENSES: \$48,496,270
- INTERDEPARTMENTAL CHARGES: \$6,635,999
- CAPITAL ASSETS: \$32,122

2025 BUDGETED REVENUES



- GENERAL GOVERNMENT: \$59,206,935
- COUNTY TAX LEVY: \$28,183,717
- CHARGES FOR SERVICE: \$12,958,103
- OTHER REVENUE: \$8,440,355

Navigating Change: Fiscal Accountability and Strategic Budgeting in 2025

Administrative Division Rightsizing

In 2025, our Administrative Services Division will undergo rightsizing, marked by a \$1.6 million resource shift aimed at addressing high turnover and optimizing contract management and grant reporting processes.

This initiative focuses on expanding revenue streams and growing collections efforts by redistributing WIMCR resources to divisions, reallocating staff from Child & Youth Family Services, dedicating fiscal staff to SSI collection efforts, and using CLTS grant revenue to bolster administrative support.

ADRC Federal Grant Changes

Due to changes in federal grants, in 2025, the ADRC will face necessary service reductions, impacting respite and personal care/bathing services. Additionally, we will implement prioritization guidelines to manage demand for Home Delivered Meals, ensuring that resources are allocated to those with the greatest need.

Job Classification Changes

For 2025, new job classifications—Human Services Care Manager and Senior Human Services Care Manager—have been established to align with state regulations, expanding and diversifying our candidate pools. These roles not only provide opportunities for upward mobility with increased experience but also ensure alignment with current pay schedules, fostering a more dynamic and competitive workforce.

Opioid Settlement Funds Utilization

In 2025, HHS will strategically utilize \$698,213 from Opioid Settlement Funds to enhance community support and response initiatives. These funds will bolster outreach, awareness, and education by supporting the Heroin Task Force/CHIP campaigns, cover the cost of 1.0 FTE crisis workers, and reinforce the Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) program through a partnership with the Medical Examiner's office, providing support for a 1.0 FTE Social Worker engaged in data analysis and interviews.

Children's Long-Term Support Program Expansion

In 2025, the Children's Long-Term Support Program anticipates supporting an additional 300 children, facilitated by the addition of 8 contracted staff and 2 contracted supervisors. This expansion, which remains levy neutral due to 100% grant-funded programs, includes strategic financial roles: 50% of a 1.0 FTE Senior Financial Analyst, 75% of a 1.0 FTE Fiscal Specialist, and a full-time Senior Fiscal Specialist dedicated to contracting, ensuring comprehensive support and efficient resource management.

Expanded Billing Operations

Our billing operations will expand by outsourcing Public Health, Clinical Inpatient, and Outpatient billing services, which will significantly increase capacity and efficiency. This strategy aims to reduce billing issues and ensure timely filing, thereby minimizing redundant work and boosting receivables, ultimately enhancing our financial performance.

Vision 2025: Priorities and Progress



Emergency Preparedness: Training for Action

We remain committed to empowering staff with confidence in emergency roles through ongoing training. FEMA is sponsoring advanced training for 90 professionals in Emmitsburg, MD, boosting our response capabilities for future emergencies.



Fiscal Accountability: Streamlining Efficiency

Collaborating with leaders across the County, we're exploring creating a central services model to reduce redundancies. Additionally, an Idea Generation tool will encourage staff to propose innovative efficiency measures.



Resilience: Supporting Our Staff

As we navigate change, supporting staff is vital. We're hosting training and listening sessions to ensure we're providing the necessary support and understanding. This approach fosters resilience, maintaining morale and adaptability in times of transition.



CISM: Building Awareness

Established in 2024, Critical Incident Stress Management offers support for those affected by traumatic incidents. By increasing awareness, we aim to better support our community and our workforce when crises occur, establishing CISM as a key resource for the community.



Accreditation: Demonstrating Excellence

Progressing towards Public Health Accreditation Board recognition, we aim to affirm our capacity for delivering essential services. Accreditation demonstrates our commitment to quality improvement, enhancing public trust and showcasing our high standards.

Data Governance: Informed Decisions

By educating staff and appointing data Subject Matter Experts in each division, we aim to harness data more effectively, informing decisions and improving departmental performance and accountability.



Youth Health and Safety: Collaborative Solutions

Collaborating with county partners, we're addressing youth mental health and co-occurring issues. By exploring better support methods, we're committed to keeping youth safe within their homes, fostering long-term stability and health for young residents.



Advocacy: Clear Communication

We're enhancing advocacy for all we serve, building strategic plans to meet department and community needs. By improving communication, we aim to build trust and engage more effectively, showcasing our role and impact within the community.



20 Mile March Framework: Strategic Progress

Implementing a streamlined strategic plan, we're adopting the 20 Mile March framework for resource management. This structured, progressive approach ensures that we consistently meet community needs based on prioritized, methodical initiatives.



Community Safety: Enhancing Well-Being

Focusing on community safety, we aim to reduce misconceptions around department services. By collaborating with safety partners and promoting data on service efficacy, we highlight how our efforts boost community health and safety for all Waukesha County residents.



Waukesha County Department of Health & Human Services



Keeping our Community
Healthy and Thriving

