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Harm reduction vending machine dispenses hundreds of boxes of Narcan in first 6 months

Vending machine, available 24/7 in Eau Claire County Jail lobby, launched in June 2023

Eau Claire, January 18, 2024 – A refurbished vending machine located in the Eau Claire County Jail lobby that dispenses free Narcan and fentanyl test strips has distributed 503 boxes of Narcan and 250 test strip kits in its first six months.

The vending machine opened for public use in June 2023. It is available to the community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office and the Eau Claire City-County Health Department have partnered to launch and maintain the vending machine.

As of December 13, six months after its launch, the vending machine had dispensed:

- **503 boxes of Narcan** (total of 1,006 doses)
- **250 fentanyl test strip kits** (total of 1,250 test strips)

“We’re thrilled that the vending machine has effectively distributed hundreds of Narcan doses and fentanyl test strips to people in our community,” says Sarah Dillivan-Pospisil, public health specialist with the Health Department. “Overdose and substance misuse have a deep impact on a community. One big step we can take to keep our family, friends, and neighbors safer is to actively distribute these tools that can prevent overdoses.”

The cost of the vending machine and supplies are supported by grants from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Funding for this pilot project will continue through June 30, 2024.

“The Sheriff’s Office understands the importance of education, resources, and collaboration in the response to the growing opioid epidemic. We are committed to prevention and intervening in the cycle of offenses,” says Eau Claire County Sheriff Dave Riewestahl.

How to use the vending machine: Anyone can use the jail lobby, 710 2nd Ave., to access the vending machine between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. To access the jail lobby after 4:30 p.m. or on weekends, people can press a button to be buzzed in by a dispatcher. The machine dispenses Narcan and test strips for free. Anyone can use the machine with no questions asked, at any time of day.



Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul is pictured with Health Department and Sheriff's Office staff next to the vending machine on Dec. 14, when Kaul met with community leaders and organizations in Eau Claire to discuss the impact of opioid use.

Narcan, also called naloxone, is a lifesaving medication that can reverse a known or suspected opioid overdose. It is a nasal spray that is easy to administer and legal to carry in Wisconsin.

Fentanyl test strips can detect the presence of fentanyl, a very strong opioid, in other drugs. Test strips must be dipped into a small portion of a drug that's dissolved in water, and within minutes, the person will know if the drug contains fentanyl. Drugs mixed with fentanyl are the leading cause of overdose deaths in Wisconsin.

The vending machine offers instructions and training in English, Hmong, and Spanish on how to use both tools. The machine can hold 120 boxes of Narcan and 150 test strip kits.

You can read more about the vending machine at the [Eau Claire Health Alliance's website](#). Community members can also obtain Narcan and fentanyl test strips at Vivent Health, 505 S. Dewey St. #107, Eau Claire.

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