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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:*****Grand Chute Police Department and Outagamie County Public Health Unveil the First Public Health Vending Machine in the Tri-County***

Outagamie County, WI – March 27, 2024

A new free community resource is now available in Outagamie County. The Grand Chute Police Department (GCPD) and the Outagamie County Public Health Division (OCPH) unveiled the first of two public health vending machines in the county today.

The Public Health Vending Machine (PHVM) located at Grand Chute Town Hall is stocked nasal naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and gun locks. The PHVM at the Outagamie County Government Center will be stocked with prevention items such as gun locks, hygiene kits, condoms, medication disposal bags, naloxone, and more.

The machines are meant to give people access to items that will help create a stronger and healthier community for all.

The PHVM is also a harm reduction strategy that can be used to combat the harmful impact opioids have had on the community. From 2019 to 2022, Outagamie County experienced 95 opioid overdose fatalities. By giving nasal naloxone and fentanyl test strips for free, the intention is that people will feel empowered to intervene in emergencies and prevent unnecessary death. Especially because time is precious when responding to an opioid overdose.

“Just a few minutes can make the difference between survival and a fatal outcome, and those minutes are easily lost during the time it takes to call 911 and for the responding officer to arrive on scene,” said Grand Chute Police Chief Greg Peterson. “For that reason, it’s imperative we continue to pursue other options.”

These machines have been shown to reduce barriers associated with accessing naloxone, including the stigma of obtaining it from a doctor or pharmacy.

“This isn’t a final solution to the opioid crisis,” said Public Health Officer Natalie Vandeveld. “This is just one step toward improving the lives of those impacted by opioids. If you are a friend, neighbor or family member of someone who is struggling with addiction you can now do something to prevent an overdose or death. That is why our focus has been getting these supplies out in the community.”

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services awarded \$50,000 in grant funds to Outagamie County Public Health and the Grand Chute Police Department each for the public health vending machines. The money comes from the state’s \$400 million opioid settlement.

For additional information, please visit www.outagamie.org/PHVM

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Outagamie County Public Health (OCPH) is a division of the Health and Human Services Department of Outagamie County. OCPH consists of 5 units: Communicable Disease, Community Health, Environmental Health, Public Health Nursing, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Our mission is to PREVENT disease and injury, PROMOTE wellness, and PROTECT the health of the community. We strive to do that by listening to our residents and using data, evidence, and research to offer solutions. We work to bring together different organizations to make decisions and take action. Our public health experts also investigate everything that affects our health – food, water, air, and more to prevent problems before they start. For more information visit our website: www.outagamie.org/PublicHealth