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Governor Releases Interagency Council Mental Health Action Plan

On May 5, Governor Tony Evers' Interagency Council on Mental Health released its statewide action plan which includes "actions state government can implement immediately to help improve Wisconsin's mental health, as well as recommendations for additional support like funding, staffing capacity and legislative action."



"These recommendations serve as a roadmap on how we can connect our services and programs to better serve the people of Wisconsin," said Kirsten Johnson, Chair of the Interagency Council on Mental Health and Department of Health Services Secretary. "This plan is actionable, and we will hit the ground running."

The Council consisted of leaders from 10 state agencies, including Department of Health Services Secretary Johnson and Department of Safety and Professional Services Secretary Dan Hereth.

Prioritizing access and removing regulatory complexity, duplication and red tape that impede access to mental health services, were key themes throughout the Interagency Council's Action Plan. These themes echo messages from WHA, WHA members and other stakeholders on the importance of prioritizing access and reducing regulatory complexity and cost that creates barriers to the availability and accessibility of mental health services. Specific quotes from the Action Plan include:

Importance of a no wrong door approach to care

- "Vision: When a person or loved one needs help, they get the care they need no matter their mental health symptoms or which door they come through."
- "Focus: No wrong door approach, a sustainable workforce, data-driven responses, and trauma-informed care in health care facilities, correctional facilities, community-based organizations, workplaces (including state offices), and other places people access services."

Recognizing and addressing agency silos, red tape and duplicative requirements to improve and expand access

- "Root causes: The council and workgroups analyzed root causes of the mental health crisis in Wisconsin, which helps us understand why Wisconsin is experiencing the mental health crisis it is."
- "Lack of integrated systems. Integrated systems streamline information sharing across multiple service providers to ensure people receive quality and timely care in the most appropriate setting. Each state agency is responsible for managing and operating its own systems to support programs and services that provides. Unfortunately, these separate systems silos and inadvertent inefficiencies like requiring someone to apply for help from multiple points through separate enrollment forms. These important, but in some cases, duplicative requirements can create unnecessary barriers that prevent Wisconsinites accessing the care need. By eliminating additional red tape and paperwork, state agencies can help improve and expand access and ensure more Wisconsinites can access the care and services they need."

Need to remove barriers to access to care identified as a frequently cited theme from communities

- “The work of the council was supported by a robust community and partner engagement Below are the most frequent themes Wisconsinites raised.”
- “Wisconsin State agencies can support a **coordinated response** for mental health by ensuring people have **access to care**. Wisconsin must have enough mental health professionals available to meet the demand for their services. State agencies can also support access to care by removing barriers to care., especially for underserved and high-risk communities who are at higher rate and risk of experiencing mental health challenges in crisis.”

Quotes from the community and partner engagement highlighted by the report included:

- “We have to meet people where they’re at and when we’re dealing with mental health, we’re dealing with the whole person.”
- “Try not to make it so difficult—things are hard enough. Forms, processes are challenging. State agencies should provide more collaboration and streamlined resources and processes to help make things less confusing and make them easier for those who are seeking help. It’s a daunting system to navigate while in a mental health crisis from a patient’s perspective.”

The Council made several recommendations in the report that it said should be “prioritized by future administrations and in upcoming budgets and legislative sessions.”

- “Revise administrative rules, state policies, and other published materials to encourage access to mental health services. Coordinate among agencies to revise administrative rules to increase access to care. When possible, align language (rules, admin code, guidance, etc.) with established best practices and seek input from those with lived experience. Review statutes and advise the Governor’s Office on potential changes to increase access to mental health care.”
- “Create payment parity across government services, for example, Comprehensive Community Services vs. Community Support Programs.”

The full Wisconsin Mental Health Action Plan published by the Governor’s Interagency Council on Mental Health can be found [here](#).

A link to the Governor’s Interagency Council on Mental Health can be found [here](#).

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EDUCATION EVENTS

May. 14, 2026

Substance Use Disorders (SUD) Management Boot Camp

Jun. 8, 2026

2026 Wisconsin Rural Health Conference

Aug. 4, 2026

Seeing the Real Market: Using Claims Enhanced Intelligence to Make Better Strategy, Access, and Growth Decisions