



Oneida Behavioral Health highlights realities of addiction for National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week

By Mari Kriescher, Director, [Oneida Behavioral Health](#)

There were 1,427 deaths due to opioid use and 4,258 opioid-related inpatient and emergency room visits in Wisconsin in 2021, according to the latest full year of data available from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. ***These two statistics have risen at an alarming rate in the past several years.*** These are just two of the many facts that Oneida Behavioral Health (OBH) wants people to know as part of National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week, which begins March 20.

Following are more stark facts. Illegal opioids have become increasingly potent, designed to purposefully to drive addiction. In recent years, it's become increasingly common to find the synthetic opioid fentanyl mixed with other illegal drugs, including other opioids. This extremely potent narcotic is one you cannot feel, see, smell or taste, so it's difficult to know whether it's been added to another drug. It takes only two salt-sized grains of fentanyl to cause death.

To help prevent opioid overdoses, OBH offers fentanyl test strips and encourages individuals to test for the presence of fentanyl in the substances before taking them. OBH also offers NARCAN®, a medicine that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose and has saved many lives. Both are easily available at no cost through OBH and other area health departments.

Alcohol is another addictive substance. In fact, alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in Wisconsin. As a depressant, it affects your central nervous system, meaning it can slow brain activity and impact your mood, behavior and self-control, leading to choices you may not normally make. Choosing to drive while impaired is often one of those choices which too often leads to tragic results. In fact, 30 percent of all crash fatalities in Wisconsin involve impaired driving, and according to the Wisconsin State Patrol 2022 statistics, someone is injured or killed every three hours in an alcohol-related crash in Wisconsin.

Why are we sharing such alarming facts?

Sharing information is often the first step in developing awareness of a situation and helping people realize they have a choice. It's the basis for much of our work here at OBH. We've shared these facts with you so that you can make more informed choices.

Oneida Behavioral Health offers resources to help address the facts we shared here, including group meetings, therapies and lifesaving resources that are made available without judgement.

If any of these facts have struck a chord, please know that Oneida Behavioral Health is here to help in a culturally sensitive way. If you, or someone you know, has an issue with substance use, please reach out today at (920) 490-3790 or visit <https://oneida-nsn.gov/resources/behavioral-health/> to learn more.

During this year's Drug and Alcohol Facts Week, please consider sharing what you've learned.