



For Immediate Release
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Sept. 5, 2024

Rally for Recovery Sept. 7

Eliminate stigma and support healing.

Recovery is for everyone. Every person, every family, every community

MADISON, Wis. – Join Wisconsin Voices for Recovery as they host their **11th** annual [Rally for Recovery](#) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

The Rally for Recovery, which is free to attend and open to all, is Wisconsin’s largest celebration of National Recovery Month which is observed each September and brings together people in recovery, their families and friends, as well as allies, public officials, treatment providers and other community members.

This event provides an opportunity to share the successes of people in recovery, learn more about recovery resources available in Wisconsin, and highlight and recognize the dedication of treatment providers, peer supports and others who help people achieve wellness and healing in their recovery journey, according to Cindy Burzinski, director of Wisconsin Voices for Recovery.

“This event is so important because it provides hope and an opportunity for connection, reflection, celebration and support for Wisconsinites,” she said. “It also provides a space to remember those lost to substance use disorders and other mental health conditions who struggled to find a path to recovery.”

Stigma around substance use disorders and harm reduction methods such as medication-assisted treatment, naloxone access and needle exchange programs, can pose a barrier to seeking support and treatment. This can prevent healing and recovery, leaving people with a substance use disorder without the help and support they need to heal and recover from this complex disorder, which takes so many lives each year, Burzinski said.

“The lives of many people from across the state have been transformed through recovery, and these successes often go unnoticed by the broader population,” she said. “The Rally for Recovery provides a vehicle for the state to celebrate these accomplishments.”

We are excited that this is our 11th year of the rally and are encouraging Wisconsinites across the state to join us at the Capitol to celebrate recovery, remember loved ones lost, and to celebrate life.

This year to kick off the rally attendees will be hearing from Michelle Haese, director of substance use initiatives with the Office of the Secretary at the Department of Health Services, Josh Kaul, Wisconsin attorney general and James Bond, the Secretary-designee of the Department of Veterans Affairs, who will be talking about mental health issues facing Wisconsin Veterans.

“We are proud to support Wisconsin Voices for Recovery as they bring people together to share stories of healing and hope at this year’s Rally for Recovery event,” Haese said. “This event demonstrates how we can reduce the stigma around substance use by talking about the experiences, challenges and opportunities there are to help people find their path to recovery. Recovery is a lifelong journey and we continue to ensure everyone in Wisconsin has access to the resources they need to live their lives.”

As this event highlights, treatment and recovery programs can help change lives, according to Kaul. “We must keep working to make these critical programs accessible to more Wisconsinites,” he said.

The Rally for Recovery is a powerful testament to strength and resilience, Bond said.

“As a veteran, I know the power of connection and community and the vital role it plays in recovery. This event is a remarkable way to celebrate all those who have made this journey and advocate for others, and I’m honored to be a part of it,” he said.

The lineup of speakers also includes presentations on the following topics:

- “Recovery is an Emergency Department on its Own,” Star, Wisconsin Community Services
- “Recovery Community Inclusivity,” Leslie Doxtater, Oneida Nation Tribal Action Plan manager
- “Ripples of Recovery throughout Our Community,” Thomas Doughman and John Plageman, Section Yellow
- “From Guidance to Growth: My experience with Mentorship and Peer Support,” Alexander Hunt, Lighthouse Recovery Community Center
- “Saving Lives by Sharing Megan's Story,” Bev Kelley-Miller, Megan Kelley Foundation
- “Beating the Odds,” – Ryan Bartlett, Ryan’s Handyman Lawn Care, LLC

Returning again this year is a hobby and wellness for recovery area, which will include activities like mindful coloring, rock painting, dream catcher creation, tie-dye drawstring bags, recovery reflection and more. Demonstrations of different activities will be hosted by people who have found them helpful and enjoyable for supporting their recovery journey. We will also present the WI Voices for Recovery Advocacy Award, which recognizes organizations that have gone above and beyond to serve those in recovery or struggling with a substance use disorder.

This year's event also features a live DJ playing music throughout the day, a kids area, Narcan training and free Narcan. Attendees will also have an opportunity to come up for an open mic to share some of their stories, expressions of recovery or support as a loved one or ally of those in recovery.

Rally speakers and staff from organizations providing mental health and substance use treatment and support services will be available for interviews throughout the day as part of a resource fair.

Visit the Wisconsin Voices for Recovery [website](#) and [Facebook event](#) for more information on this year's Rally for Recovery and a detailed schedule. Wisconsin Voices for Recovery is a part of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

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