



## Opioids: Governor’s Task Force on Opioid Abuse Recommendations

Governor Scott Walker’s Task Force on Opioid Abuse held a number of meetings around the state in 2017, taking testimony and listening to citizens and advocates share their experiences with opioid abuse in their communities. The Task Force included members of the health care community, law enforcement (including State Attorney General Brad Schimel), elected officials and state agency officials. The Task Force also worked with renowned national thinktank experts from The Pew Charitable Trusts, some of whom embedded themselves in Wisconsin, interviewing health care experts, advocacy groups, policymakers and others who shared thoughts on the opioid crisis.

On January 19, 2018 Task Force co-chairs State Assembly Representative John Nygren and Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch released their recommendations, which reflect the group’s 2017 meetings and Pew’s findings. Many of those proposals are now included in two separate pieces of legislation that have been gathering cosponsors in the State Capitol. One bill focuses on law enforcement, while the other—LRB 5242/2—is aimed at health care and workforce. The bill would

- Tighten continuing education requirements for healthcare professions able to prescribe opioids. Modeled after proactive requirements established at the state’s Medical Examining Board, the bill reached physician assistants, dentists, optometrists, podiatrists and advance practice nurse prescribers.
- Allow more members of the physician-led health care team to utilize buprenorphine.
- Expand Substance Abuse Counselor capacity.
- Require school boards to include drug abuse awareness and prevention in health instruction.
- Fund online training resources for social services workers who handle substance abuse cases.
- Boost the University of Wisconsin’s graduate program in psychiatric mental health nursing.

**Request for Legislators:** *Wisconsin’s physicians continue to serve as partners with the legislature on fighting the opioid epidemic. There is no single solution that will halt the crisis, so multiple approaches are needed. LRB 5242/2 is another proactive effort in education, training and treatment. We ask legislators to support the bill and continue strengthening relationships with physicians on this critical public health issue.*

### The Basics

LRB 5242/2S

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