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First Program Participants Complete Vivitrol Treatment Pilot Program

DE PERE – Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Jon Litscher joined State Representative John Nygren, family and friends, community treatment providers, and other invited guests to recognize the first group of participants to complete DOC's Vivitrol Treatment pilot program. The program is part of Governor Scott Walker's push to combat opioid abuse in Wisconsin.

Governor Walker convened a [Task Force on Opioid Abuse](#) co-chaired by Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Representative Nygren in late 2016 to coordinate efforts to fight the opioid crisis facing Wisconsin. Secretary Litscher also served as a member of the Task Force. The Task Force issued a [report](#) in early 2017 outlining current programs and recommending additional actions to further the state's work in preventing opioid abuse.

The Vivitrol Pilot program was included in the 2015 – 2017 state budget by Representative Nygren and Senator Vukmir and signed into law by Governor Walker. The program was appropriated \$1.6 million in funding and currently operates in Brown, Calumet, Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Waupaca, and Winnebago counties.

Offenders releasing from DOC treatment facilities to community supervision or already on community supervision in the counties above receive monthly injections of Vivitrol and intensive AODA treatment during the pilot program. Other states, including Colorado, Missouri, and Florida, are exploring similar programs. Participation in the program is voluntary.

Vivitrol is an opioid antagonist that binds to opioid receptors, preventing opioids from attaching and blocking the effects of opioids. Using Vivitrol can help to decrease the likelihood of relapse while an individual is completing AODA treatment.

Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch said: "As offenders reenter our communities, we want them to have the best chance at success in their new lives. That means stable housing and job skills, and in the case of those struggling with addiction it also means treatment. This innovative pilot is using medically assisted treatment to help addicts stay clean so they can focus on rebuilding their lives rather than returning to their bad habits."

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Secretary Litscher said: “Our core commitment is public safety; we believe that it is our responsibility to provide options that prepare inmates for success in the community. This pilot is an innovative model that provides individuals with a history of opioid dependency the chance to receive treatment, find a job or start school, and become productive citizens.”

Representative Nygren said: “I’m proud of the investments we’ve made in crucial treatment opportunities for Wisconsinites who struggle with addiction. The Vivitrol pilot program is yet another example of this investment. It’s clear that there isn’t a one-size-fits-all treatment model that works for everyone. It’s for this reason that expanding access to medication assisted treatment to individuals being in the correctional system will provide more stability for those re-entering society. I’m happy that this program is already graduating its first class, and I look forward to seeing the successes of participants for years to come.”

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