

# Community Pharmacy Resources to Mitigate the Effects of Wisconsin's Opioid Crisis

## Benefits to Treatment Court Participants

- Increases access to naltrexone injections and related services
- Flexible scheduling (including evenings and weekends)
- Increases convenience to access services outside of clinic visits
- **Capitalizes on existing trusted relationship with pharmacist**
- Reduces stigma (pharmacy preserves anonymity)
- Minimizes participant travel
- Makes it easier for participants to stay compliant
- Creates clearer participant expectations
- Creates critical access point for people leaving the criminal justice system
- Assists participants with insurance issues

To see the full list of our injectable naltrexone related resources, including a link to the WATCP video, please scan the QR code below.



## Exploring the role of community pharmacist-provided injectable naltrexone (Vivitrol®) for treatment court participants.

The increased rates of opioid-related deaths and emergency room visits<sup>1</sup> in Wisconsin underscores the fact that the state's opioid crisis continues to be a major public health issue. The preferred evidence-based treatment for persons with an opioid use disorder (OUD) combines the use of FDA-approved medications for OUD (MOUD) with counseling and behavioral therapies. However, access to MOUD has not kept up with increased demand.

**As of 8/31/2021, in WI there have been 835 opioid-related deaths in the year.<sup>1</sup>**

In Wisconsin, pharmacists are able to provide long-acting injectable naltrexone, an approved and effective MOUD treatment. Pharmacists, who are more geographically accessible, have a unique perspective on what to expect pharmacologically with an OUD medication, and they can proactively follow up with participants once a medication is provided.

Since 2018, the Ford Research Group at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy, lead by Dr. Jay Ford, has been researching community pharmacist-provided injectable naltrexone services.

Part of our goal is to understand how community pharmacists can potentially benefit treatment court programs. In 2021, we surveyed and conducted a focus group with treatment court coordinators in Wisconsin. What was evident in our findings was that there was widespread lack of awareness about community pharmacist-provided injectable naltrexone. While many barriers were discussed, coordinators could see the the benefit of this collaboration.

*"I think getting pharmacists, especially in rural communities, involved in [MOUD] would be extremely helpful."*

~ Treatment Court Coordinator

To further inform treatment court coordinators of this service, we held a joint webinar with the Wisconsin Association of Treatment Court Professionals membership and community pharmacists offering injectable naltrexone. A link to the video of the webinar is available via the QR code to the left.

We hope to further explore this potential collaboration with future research funding.

**Questions?**

[fordresearchgroup@pharmacy.wisc.edu](mailto:fordresearchgroup@pharmacy.wisc.edu)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/dashboards.htm>