The Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP), an anti-poverty agency that works with the five-county region of Grant, Green, Iowa, LaFayette and Richland counties, is using a grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program to improve opioid treatment and recovery in rural Wisconsin.

### Addressing Wisconsin’s Opioid Problem

Opioid addiction is a complex problem that is affecting every community in Wisconsin – touching people of all backgrounds. Addressing the problem requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on education and prevention as well as treatment and recovery.

Two community grants supported by the Wisconsin Partnership Program are addressing the opioid challenge head on—one, through a statewide school program aimed at education and prevention; the second, through an innovative project focusing on treatment and recovery in rural Wisconsin.

In 2017, the WisconsinEye Public Affairs Network was awarded a $50,000 Community Catalyst Grant to support its film Straight Forward: The Truth about Addiction. The film is a peer-to-peer documentary that discusses addiction through the lives of several young Wisconsinites in recovery, fighting to reclaim their futures. Funding from the Wisconsin Partnership Program supports the curriculum, lesson plans and statewide outreach efforts. The project’s goal is to create awareness about addiction and empower young people and their families with information and inspiration to live sober and successful lives.

Jon Henkes, WisconsinEye President, says, “Currently, there is not a message of prevention and education specifically targeted at this peer-to-peer level, and we hope to close that information gap.” To date, more than 5,000 students, teachers and parents across Wisconsin have viewed the film. More school viewings, and public meetings, are scheduled throughout the state.

The project’s goal is ambitious—to show the film in every middle and high school in Wisconsin by the end of the 2019 academic year. Says Henkes, “We can already see our message is having a powerful impact. Besides gaining understanding, kids are now showing the courage to have conversations about their use or risk for use, and we believe that’s a step in the right direction.”

Watch the film: wiseye.org/Straight-Forward
The Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP), an anti-poverty agency that works with the five-county region of Grant, Green, Iowa, LaFayette and Richland counties, received a five-year $1 million Community Impact Grant to create the Southwestern Recovery Pathways program. The program will pilot a model of community-based opioid use treatment and recovery. The project’s goal is to build a sustainable and replicable model of coordinated access to a range of medical, physical, emotional, social and economic wraparound services for people in recovery. At the center of the program, sober-living housing will aid recovery by providing an environment removed from negative influences and triggers, and will consist of monitoring, support and counseling. SWCAP will pilot the model in Richland and Iowa counties.

Says Walter Orzechowski, SWCAP Executive Director, “Funding from the Partnership Program allows us to focus specifically on addiction issues. Now we are able to combine the resources and services of SWCAP to meet the specific needs of people struggling with addiction and recovery—with the essential added component of sober-living housing.” This is especially important in rural communities where challenges and pressures are high and resources are low. In addition, support from the Partnership Program has helped SWCAP position itself as a leader in addressing opioid addiction. The team recently received a $250,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to advance its work. “We recognize that this epidemic has underlying social and economic challenges that can’t be fixed strictly through medical and clinical treatment. We hope our approach offers one of many solutions to reducing the toll of addiction on our state.”

In addition to these community grants, the Wisconsin Partnership Program supports opioid addiction research. The project Screening in Trauma for Opioid Misuse Prevention (STOMP) is developing a screening tool to predict risk for opioid misuse and related complications after traumatic injury, when people are at greater risk for misusing opioids. Researchers will pilot the implementation of the tool at University Hospital in Madison and four Wisconsin trauma centers.

Read the story at med.wisc.edu/stomp.