



BRAD PFAFF **STATE SENATOR**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sen. Pfaff Column: Mental Health Resources Save Lives

Every year, we lose too many people to overdose and suicide. Addiction and mental health struggles are silent, and often we don't hear a call for help until it's too late. September is National Suicide Prevention Month and National Recovery Month, and it's critical we take both of these issues seriously.

When I led the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), I traveled the state and heard firsthand the tremendous emotional and financial stress that is taking place in our countryside. As a State Senator, I've met with mothers in La Crosse who shared painful stories of losing their children to overdose. "We could have prevented this" is the most heartbreaking sentence a grieving spouse or parent can utter. We must do better for our kids, our families, and our communities.

This year's state budget saw a renewed focus on mental health. I am proud to have fought for an additional \$12 million for mental health in schools, as well as an additional \$7 million for school-based mental health grants.

These funds are important, but we still have a long way to go. Expanding mental health services for rural communities, investing in regional drug treatment facilities, and continuing to expand student health options at every level will save lives in our community. I stand ready to collaborate with my colleagues in the legislature as we continue charting a path forward to provide families and health professionals with tools to remediate the unnecessary loss of life from overdose and suicide.

During September, I encourage everyone to take a few minutes to learn about the resources available to prevent suicide and promote recovery. To get started, you can visit findtreatment.samhsa.gov and dhs.wisconsin.gov/prevent-suicide.

Together, we can better work to prevent these tragedies from ever happening.

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If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255) or call 911 immediately.

SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357), is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32nd Senate District, which includes La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and southern Monroe County.