



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
*Milwaukee County*  
SCOTT WALKER • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WALKER CONGRATULATES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION  
ON RECEIVING PRESTIGIOUS HARVARD UNIVERSITY AWARD**

MILWAUKEE – County Executive Scott Walker attended a ceremony for Milwaukee County Behavioral Health staff to congratulate the division on receiving a prestigious national award.

The [Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation](#) at the [John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University](#) awarded [Wraparound Milwaukee](#) of Milwaukee County as the 2009 winner of the Annie E. Casey Innovations Award in Children and Family System Reform. As part of Milwaukee County’s Department of Health and Human Services, Wraparound Milwaukee is the first government-operated managed care service designed to treat emotionally disturbed youth in the home setting.

“I appreciate the efforts of all the staff involved at our Behavioral Health Division who coordinate with multiple parties to make this program successful,” said Walker. “The success of Wraparound Milwaukee is a shining example of the work they do and this award will allow other states to benefit from their experience.”

The program is one of six government initiatives honored as Innovations in American Government Award winners. A PBS-produced documentary highlighting this year’s winners, [2009 Visionaries](#) (scroll to 11:45 to view) included a segment on the Wraparound Milwaukee program. The grant will enable the program to share its innovative practices for individualizing the treatment of youth through family involvement and a unified set of services.

Launched in 1995, Wraparound Milwaukee serves an annual 1,300 youth with diagnosable mental health disorders such as depression, attention deficit disorder, or learning impairments that prevent normal functioning in home, school, or outside community settings. Over 50 percent of these children come from families at or below the federal poverty line. Eligible youth are already being treated by two or more social service systems and are often in the process of moving to more formal residential treatment centers, correctional facilities, or psychiatric hospitals.

Wraparound attempts to reduce costly and arguably ineffective residential care options by offering a host of individualized treatments that allow youth to stay with their families. Care options and services include tutoring and after school programs, group care, recreation and camp, arts programs, and substance abuse treatment as viable alternatives to inpatient treatment. Additionally, the program encourages family members to play a more active role in the treatment process as members of the care planning team.

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Unlike other state models of care, Wraparound unites all care agencies – including Mental Health and Special Education – into one integrated treatment organization whereby funding is pooled across all agencies. As a result, youth and their families receive one care plan operated by a single case manager regardless of how many services are used. Wraparound includes the country's first publicly operated public benefits corporation, acting as the single payor for not only mental health needs, but all social services. Families have the opportunity to choose what support and mental health services are appropriate for their individual needs.

The program has achieved notable results over its 14-year history and reports significant cost-savings.

- In 2007, the average monthly cost to place a youth at a traditional Wisconsin treatment center was over \$8,000. Due to Wraparound's lessened use of residential options, Wraparound's average care cost was nearly \$4,000 over the same period.
- Wraparound cites a drop in residential placements since its inception: from 375 youth placements in 1996 to 90 placements in 2008.
- The program argues such reduced utilization of costly inpatient and often last-resort services allows mental health workers to focus more on improved treatment. Clinical scores incorporating feedback from youth, families, and clinicians note an average 20 point improvement of clinical health indicators of treated youth.

"The program integrates services and funding across child serving systems to achieve the best possible outcomes for children with serious emotional and mental health needs," said Bruce Kamradt, director, Children's Mental Health Services, Milwaukee County and director, Wraparound Milwaukee. "Through its very individualized, strength-based, comprehensive services and focus on family involvement, Wraparound demonstrates that even children with the most complex needs can be effectively and safely cared for in their homes instead of institutions."

**About the Annie E. Casey Foundation**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization, whose primary mission is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. For more information, visit [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

**About the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation**

The Roy and Lila Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, education, international programs, and government innovations awards, the Institute fosters creative and effective government problem solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world's citizens. The Ford Foundation is a founding donor of the Institute. Additional information about the Ash Institute is available at [www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu](http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu).

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