



ANNUAL REPORT 2025





In partnership with the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory, Milwaukee County is proud to celebrate the opening and move-in of the new shared facility for the Office of Emergency Management and Medical Examiner's Office—an exciting and transformative milestone for our community.

The Office of Emergency Management serves as a centralized hub for emergency preparedness, disaster response, recovery coordination, and public safety operations. Designed to support rapid decision-making and community resilience, the facility provides a secure and collaborative environment where emergency personnel, public agencies, and community partners work together to protect lives, property, and essential services during critical situations.

This innovative, state-of-the-art facility strengthens interagency collaboration and enhances our ability to serve the community through preparedness education, coordinated emergency response, and critical support services. The new facility reflects Milwaukee County's deep appreciation for the professionals who serve our community every day and our continued commitment to providing them with an environment where they can do their best work.



MESSAGE FROM MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE DAVID CROWLEY



Achieving Milwaukee County's vision of becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin requires all of us working together. The Office of Emergency Management is central to that effort, using

data to make decisions and advance life-saving innovations for the residents and families we serve.

In 2025, OEM exemplified what it means to lead with purpose. Through bold partnerships and a commitment to expanding access to emergency services, they reached more residents than ever before.

One of the year's most remarkable achievements was the continued success of the whole blood transfusion pilot program. Launched in November 2024 in partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin, Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Diagnostic Laboratory Blood Bank, and municipal fire departments, the program delivered extraordinary results in its first full year. 41 individuals received whole blood transfusions in the field following traumatic injuries, giving them a fighting chance at survival that simply wasn't possible before.

Not only were lives saved, Milwaukee County also made history with this program. We were the first EMS system in Wisconsin, and one of the first fire-based EMS systems in the nation, to implement prehospital whole blood transfusion. Only one-percent of EMS agencies nationwide have built a program like this. I am proud that

Milwaukee County is among them, and proud of OEM for once again leading the way.

That leadership was demonstrated again in August 2025, when a historic storm and 1,000-year flood struck Southeastern Wisconsin. OEM responded swiftly, activating a coordinated Emergency Operations Center that united state, federal, and municipal emergency professionals to assess damage, deploy resources, communicate critical information to the public, and support residents in the long work of recovery.

OEM also coordinated Initial Damage Assessments with public health and emergency response partners from across the state, significantly accelerating the federal aid process. Their thorough local reporting allowed FEMA teams to complete many property assessments virtually, moving the community closer to federal aid much faster than is typical during these types of disasters. As a result, FEMA distributed more than \$152 million to over 30,000 Milwaukee County residents and households, providing a critical foundation for recovery.

The work of the Office of Emergency Management exemplifies the dedication, innovation, and forward-thinking approach that is helping Milwaukee County achieve its vision. I am deeply grateful for their unwavering commitment to protecting and advancing the safety and well-being of our community, and I look forward to continuing this important work for years to come.

David Crowley
Milwaukee County Executive



MESSAGE FROM OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP



We are proud to present the 2025 Annual Report for the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). This past year tested our systems, our partnerships, and our resilience, and it also demonstrated the

strength of our community and the dedication of those who serve it.

At OEM, we remain committed to ensuring that every resident and visitor has access to critical public safety resources. In alignment with Milwaukee County's race and health equity vision, we continue to focus on reducing disparities in emergency preparedness and response, recognizing that those most vulnerable are often the most impacted during times of crisis.

In 2025, Milwaukee County faced a historic flooding event that required a coordinated, county-wide response. OEM worked closely with local municipalities, state partners, and federal agencies, including FEMA and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), to support response and recovery efforts. From initial damage assessments to ongoing coordination of resources, our team played a critical role in helping communities navigate the path to recovery. This event reinforced the importance of preparedness, strong partnerships, and a unified approach to emergency management, emphasizing that residents are part of a resilient community.

Building on last year's innovation, we continued to expand the whole blood program within the Milwaukee County EMS system. What began as a groundbreaking initiative has grown into a critical component of prehospital care, improving outcomes for patients experiencing severe trauma. By increasing availability and integration across our EMS partners, we are strengthening our ability to deliver life-saving care when and where it is needed most.

OEM also advanced its work in opioid harm reduction, using data and partnerships to address one of the most pressing public health challenges facing our community. Through expanded analytics, targeted response strategies, and collaboration with healthcare and community organizations, we are working to reduce overdose deaths and connect individuals to critical resources and support.

In addition, OEM continued moving toward completion of a new, state-of-the-art public safety facility, developed in partnership with the Milwaukee County Office of the Medical Examiner and the Wisconsin State Crime Lab. This facility represents a significant investment in regional collaboration, co-locating critical public safety functions to enhance coordination, efficiency, and service delivery. It will strengthen our ability to respond to complex incidents while advancing forensic science, emergency management operations, and system-wide integration.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to strengthening emergency response, advancing health equity, and enhancing community preparedness across Milwaukee County. We are actively developing new strategies and initiatives to address emerging safety concerns, ensuring our community remains resilient and well-prepared for future challenges.

On behalf of the entire OEM team, we are deeply appreciative of the strength, partnership, and shared commitment demonstrated by our community this year. Your engagement and support are essential to our success, and we remain honored to serve alongside you in advancing a safer and more resilient Milwaukee County.

Cassandra Libal
Executive Director

Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management – Mission Statement

WE HELP PEOPLE IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES.

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

VALUES

- Inclusion** — Actively seeking diverse perspectives when making decisions to ensure representation and inclusivity in emergency management processes.
- Influence** — Collaboratively leveraging our collective power to positively impact our community’s resilience and preparedness for emergencies.
- Integrity** — Committing to doing the right thing with transparency and accountability, even in challenging situations, and when no one is watching.
- Innovation** — Embracing data and new technologies to drive continuous improvement in emergency management and response efforts, ensuring agility and effectiveness in facing evolving challenges.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Build Organizational Strength** — Enhance internal capabilities, resources, and resilience through training, talent development, and streamlined processes for effective emergency response.
- Increase Partnerships** — Expand collaborations with government agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and residents to improve coordination, resource sharing, and community support during emergencies.
- Maximize Use of Data and Information Technology** — Leverage advanced technology and data analytics for better situational awareness, decision-making, and communication during emergencies, enhancing overall response effectiveness.



OVERALL BUDGET SUMMARY

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2026 Adopted Budget	2025/2026 Variance
Expenditures					
Personnel Costs	4,578,198	6,057,580	5,772,048	5,822,660	50,612
Operations Costs	5,701,718	5,659,627	5,939,266	6,598,006	658,740
Debt & Depreciation	0	0	0	0	0
Interdepartmental Charges	(42,321)	116,704	225,856	365,204	139,348
Total Expenditures	\$10,237,594	\$11,833,911	\$11,937,170	\$12,785,870	\$848,700
Revenues					
Other Direct Revenue	875,583	1,099,330	1,094,427	1,302,247	207,820
State & Federal Revenue	552,779	625,768	554,500	540,900	(13,600)
Indirect Revenue	0	0	1,854,339	2,394,124	539,785
Total Revenues	\$1,428,362	\$1,725,098	\$3,503,266	\$4,237,271	\$734,005
Tax Levy	\$8,809,232	\$10,108,813	\$8,433,904	\$8,548,599	\$114,695
Personnel					
Full Time Pos (FTE)	60.00	61.00	71.00	71.00	0.00
Overtime \$	427,175	522,931	202,500	209,006	6,506
Seasonal/Hourly/Pool	260,676	403,601	561,397	592,981	31,584

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DIVISION DIRECTOR: PAUL RIEGEL

Mission & Vision The Emergency Management Division ensures a safer, more resilient community by coordinating efforts to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters in Milwaukee County. This is achieved through planning, training, exercises, public education, and collaboration with the whole community.

Service Summary In 2025, the Emergency Management Division navigated one of its most operationally demanding years in recent memory. A historic flood event in August tested the division’s response capabilities at an unprecedented scale, resulting in the largest Individual Assistance disaster declaration in the United States that year. Alongside this major response, the division continued to advance its core preparedness mission — continuing the tornado siren replacement project, expanding sheltering partnerships, advancing harm reduction initiatives, and deepening collaboration across Milwaukee County and the region.

AUGUST 2025 HISTORIC FLOOD EVENT

The defining event of 2025 for the Emergency Management Division was the historic flood that struck Southeast Wisconsin in August. The scale and impact of the disaster required a full mobilization of OEM’s capabilities and a coordinated response with municipal, state, and federal partners.

OEM activated the Emergency Operations Center and played a central role in directing resources across the affected region. A rapid damage assessment effort — guided in large part by GIS analysis — deployed over

300 volunteers and resulted in more than 3,400 damage assessments completed in the highest-impact areas. This work directly supported Southeast Wisconsin’s successful application for federal Individual Assistance, securing what became the largest IA disaster declaration in the United States in 2025.

In the weeks following the event, OEM continued to support recovery coordination, including the development of a Municipal Status Dashboard to track ongoing recovery needs across jurisdictions, a Recovery Data Initial Report, and a comprehensive GIS After-Action Review that documented all data products and analytical efforts deployed during the response.

SHELTERING INITIATIVES

Sheltering remained a central focus of OEM’s work in 2025. Throughout the year, the division responded to multiple shelter requests stemming from apartment fires and other displacement events across Milwaukee County, including the Highland Court Apartment Fire in May (85 units, with a shelter opened at Holler Park Pavilion), fires on Hampton Avenue and Appleton Avenue in June, and a February shelter request following an apartment fire on N. 85th Street. OEM maintained its partnership with the American Red Cross, Milwaukee Fire Department, and the Urgent Sheltering Task Force to coordinate shelter activation and access to Milwaukee County facilities.

The Emergency Shelter Dashboard — developed in 2024 — continued to serve as a key coordination tool, and in March it was formally disseminated to the Urgent Sheltering Task Force for broader use. Planning continued throughout 2025 to develop sustainable shelter solutions, including extensive work with the Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center (CRC) and its Parks partners to develop a CRC Emergency Response Plan.

In July, OEM initiated a new workgroup with the Red Cross and Airport Emergency Management to develop a Reunification and Family Assistance Operations Annex to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.



TRAINING & EXERCISES

The Emergency Management Division maintained an active training and exercise schedule in 2025, engaging staff across a wide range of disciplines and collaborating with partner agencies to build and assess regional capabilities.

Notable Exercises

- Mitchell International Airport Severe Weather Tabletop Exercise (April)
- Zone E Biological TTX Board Game Exercise (March)
- Cobalt Blue Thunder TTX and Workshop at MRMC (June) — a multi-jurisdictional exercise focused on healthcare emergency response
- Southeast Wisconsin COAD Tabletop Exercise (planning initiated in June)
- MRMC Functional Exercise (planned for October, with planning throughout the year)
- WebEOC Drills conducted with WEM

Notable Training

- Mitigation for Emergency Managers – *Natalie Meier (Portage, WI; April)*
- Recovery from Disaster: The Local Community Role – *Natalie Meier (Monroe, WI; April)*
- ICS 300 Update – *Tim Salamon (April)*
- LEPC Conference – *Tim Salamon (April)*
- L1302 COOP Program Management – *Tim Salamon (May)*
- Damage Assessment Workshop / Survey 123 – *regional training with WEM (April)*
- MEPC Duty Officer training series – *Natalie Meier (May–June)*
- ICS/EOC Interface – *Staff (June)*
- 2025 Governor’s Conference – *Tim Salamon (March)*
- 2025 WAHMR Conference – *Tim Salamon (March)*



OUTREACH & PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Emergency Management Division continued its commitment to public outreach and whole-community preparedness education throughout 2025. Staff participated in and facilitated outreach events targeting diverse audiences — from senior citizens to neighborhood organizations.

Notable outreach activities included a “Tech Tips for Seniors during Disasters” presentation at the Wauwatosa Civic Center in March, a presentation on the Extreme Weather Task Force at the Wisconsin Public Health Association conference in May, and participation in National Night Out at MPD District 4 in August. OEM also conducted public information and warning dissemination for multiple weather events throughout the year, including extreme heat watches and advisories, an air quality alert, tornado watches, and severe storms.

Social media continued to be an active communication channel, with campaigns covering Severe Weather Awareness Week, Flood Safety Awareness Week, Heat Awareness Day, EMS Week, and weather event-specific messaging.

PLANNING

2025 saw significant planning activity across a range of areas. OEM continued to advance and complete updates to its planning portfolio, including:

- North Shore CEMP – *annual update completed (March)*
- Regional CEMP Update – *continued progress throughout the year*
- OEM-Parks Plan/Agreement Review – *updated (April)*
- New Cogg's Building Emergency Action Plan – *completed (May)*
- MCDOT Emergency Action Plan – *initiated (June)*
- CRC Emergency Response Plan – *initiated (April), developed through intensive stakeholder engagement with Parks staff and Red Cross across numerous planning meetings*
- Criminal Justice Facility (CJF) Emergency Response Plan – *initiated (April)*
- Courtroom Emergency Action Plans – *initiated (February)*
- Reunification & Family Assistance Operations Annex – *initiated (July)*

OEM also continued work on updating the Milwaukee County Hazard Mitigation Plan, with planning meetings held in February and March. Staff continued to participate in the Southeast Wisconsin Regional WEM coordination structure.



GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

Much of the GIS team’s work in 2025 built on the successes of previous years. The team continued to support the Emergency Management Division’s sheltering initiatives through updates to the Emergency Shelter Dashboard and a cold weather risk analysis. OEM’s GIS professionals also continued their work assisting the Emergency Medical Services Division, conducting spatial analyses to evaluate the placement of mobile blood resources within the EMS system and investigating the spatial distribution of cardiac arrests with respect to social vulnerability. Additionally, the team advanced ongoing efforts with the 911 Communications Division to prepare for the implementation of Next Generation 911 systems. As in years past, the GIS team’s work spanned a wide range of projects requiring collaboration across OEM divisions, Milwaukee County departments, and beyond, two of which are highlighted below.

GIS in the August 2025 Flood Event Response

During the historic flood event last August, OEM’s GIS team played a critical role in supporting Emergency Operations Center leadership with timely and accurate data products. The team focused on flood impact visualization, coordination with state and municipal partners on specialized task planning, and the sharing of impact data with municipalities and NGOs. Most critically, GIS analyses guided a rapid damage assessment effort, directing the deployment of over 300 volunteers and resulting in more than 3,400 assessments completed in high-density areas of significant damage. This work directly contributed to Southeast Wisconsin receiving the largest Individual Assistance disaster declaration in the United States in 2025.

GIS Supporting Harm Reduction Initiatives

The GIS team continued to collaborate with partners across Milwaukee County to ensure that harm reduction efforts are grounded in data. This work included updates to the Harm Reduction Vending Machine dashboard, the development of overdose risk assessments and community canvassing maps, and the provision of geocoding services that give critical data a spatial dimension. As the harm reduction landscape continues to evolve, OEM’s GIS capabilities will adapt to meet the challenges ahead.

EVENT & INCIDENT SUPPORT

OEM supported the following key incidents and events in 2025:

- February Winter Storm (Feb. 12) – *County Snow Emergency and Closure; emergency alert issued*
- N. 85th St. Apartment Fire Shelter Request (Feb. 8) – *shelter coordination with Red Cross*
- Plaza Motel Fire – *ARC shelter opened at Holler Park (Apr. 2)*
- No Kings Protest / ICE March – *EOC activations (June)*
- Highland Court Apartment Fire (May 11) – *85-unit fire, shelter at Holler Park*
- Hampton Ave. and Appleton Ave. Apartment Fires (June) – *shelter coordination*
- Extreme Heat Watch & Advisory (July) – *press release with MHD, EWTF communications*
- Air Quality Alert (July) – *public information disseminated*
- Tornado Watch (July) – *social media and partner notifications*
- Flood Event (August) – *EOC activation, GIS-guided damage assessment, federal disaster declaration*



SERVICE OUTPUTS

The following table reflects key service output metrics for 2025. *Note: some year-end totals are pending final tabulation from scorecard data.*

Metric	2025 Total
Siren Tests Conducted	12
Siren Activations	1
Exercises Conducted	7
Response Incidents Supported	10+
Shelter Activations	4+
EOC Activations	2
Plan Updates Completed	4
New Plans Initiated	7
GIS Projects Completed	7
GIS Tasks Completed	10
Public Information Warnings Issued	8
Social Media Campaigns	8

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Milwaukee Regional Medical Center Emergency Preparedness Committee (MEPC)
- Southeast Wisconsin Incident Management Team (SE WI IMT)
- Milwaukee/Waukesha Corporations and Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD)
- Southeast Wisconsin Homeland Security Public Private Partnership (SWHSP)
- Wisconsin Emergency Management – Southeast Region
- American Red Cross
- Greater Milwaukee Extreme Weather Task Force (EWTF)
- Wisconsin Heat Health Network
- Forward Service Assessment Team (FAST)
- Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Milwaukee Fire Department / Shelter Task Force



911 COMMUNICATION

DIVISION DIRECTOR: KINNYETTA PATTERSON

Mission & Vision The Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management 911 Division is dedicated to providing the highest level of excellence and professional emergency services to Milwaukee County. Our vision is to work diligently to fulfill our duties in a manner that inspires trust, confidence, and partnership. OEM 911 Communications achieves the highest level of public confidence through continuous improvement, teamwork and exceptional levels of professionalism to those we serve.

Service Summary The OEM 911 Communication Division serves as the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for Milwaukee County. Milwaukee County OEM provides cellular 911 call-taking services for West Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, South Milwaukee, Greenfield, Cudahy, Greendale, and occasionally from other PSAPs within Milwaukee County. By screening redundant calls, overall volume is reduced, and staff strain is mitigated. Dispatchers take 911 calls and coordinate services with the Medical Examiner’s Office, the Department of Transportation’s Highway Division, dispatch sheriff deputies, park rangers, and district attorney investigators.

Training — In 2025, the 911 Communications Division submitted for recertification of it’s training program from the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO). We certified five additional dispatchers. In 2025, the center will expand to provide fire and emergency medical dispatching services.

Command Duty Officers — The OEM Command Duty Officers (CDO) are responsible for 24/7 emergency messaging among departments and agencies county and region wide. CDOs transfer data received from EMS field providers to hospitals about vital patient code to ensure optimal care immediately upon patient entry. In 2024, CDOs activated the trauma team with 98% accuracy. The team also provides Dispatcher Assisted CPR to callers witnessing cardiac arrest. The CDOs are a vital link in the chain of survival by providing CPR instructions prior to EMS arrival. CDOs provide this service to Greendale, Hales Corners, Franklin, South Milwaukee and Cudahy. In September of 2024, we were awarded the Southeast Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (HERC) Regional 7 Call Center contact again for the 8th year. As the Region 7 Call Center, our Command Duty Officers are the 24/7 information reception and distribution point during large-scale emergencies within or involving Wisconsin Region 7.

Quality Assurance — The Quality Assurance (QA) Coordinator is responsible for evaluating 911 calls and radio transmissions for the entire department. The department is consistently maintaining an accuracy above 95%. OEM is the only organization with a dedicated Quality Assurance Coordinator for its 911 operations. We evaluated over 2,600 calls and transmissions in 2025.

Technology — 911 Communications completed a major upgrade to our phone system and replaced our radio consoles that were end of life. These upgrades will transition to our new facility in Q2 of 2026, creating a state of the art 911 Communication Center.

OEM is the only Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) authorized agency in Milwaukee County. Emergency Alert messages are text message warnings, similar to AMBER alerts, sent to alert citizens who may be in harm’s way without the need to subscribe to a specialized app or platform.

Dispatch Staffing — In 2025, we spent time developing our staff. We participated in ASIST [Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Trainings] workshops in partnership with Milwaukee Mobile Crisis. The ASIST workshop provided practical, evidence-based tools for recognizing and responding to individuals at risk of suicide. From a 911 dispatcher's perspective, the training emphasized how our tone, questioning, and active listening can directly impact a caller's safety during crisis situations. The workshop reinforced strategies for building rapport quickly, identifying warning signs over the phone, and collaboratively creating short term safety plans until help arrives. The training strengthened staff confidence in handling high-risk emotional calls and enhanced our role as the first link in lifesaving intervention.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & ENGAGEMENT

- Translation services offers over 100 different language translations available ensuring response during emergencies is inclusive to a diverse community.
- Serves as a member of the Wisconsin 911 Subcommittee under the direction of the Department of Military Affairs.
- Through a department wide donation drive we collected hygiene and baby essentials for the Sojourner Truth House here in Milwaukee. We're grateful to everyone who contributed to making a positive impact on local families.
- Member, Association for Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
- Member, National Emergency Number Association (NENA)

911 CPR Calls Received	95
Calls Needing CPR	24
Calls Received CPR	24
Victims Survived to ED	21
Victims Survived Discharge.....	2
Total Call Volume	230,335
Admin Calls	119,357
911 Calls.....	54,275
Abandoned Calls.....	3,864
Outgoing Calls	56,564
Open Records Requests Fulfilled	642

Language (TOP 3)	# APCO Certified
Spanish 333	Avg Answer Time 98%
Rohingya 5	Less than 90 sec 77%
French and Chinese 4 each	Abandon rate less than 10%
	Text-to-911 178



RADIO SERVICES

DIVISION DIRECTOR: TERESA BREYER

Mission & Vision The Radio Services Division is dedicated to maintaining unified public safety through advanced interoperability. Our vision is to continue to provide reliable, equitable, and equal communications, further enhancing the quality-of-life services provided to those within Milwaukee County. By achieving racial equity and applying intentional inclusion, OEM Radio is equally contributing to Milwaukee County’s vision of becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

Service Summary

System Efficiency: The OASIS System sustained over a 90% efficiency rating over the course of 2025 and completed 19,405,663 total push to talks on the OASIS system. Inter-Radio Frequency Subsystem interface has been stable for the entire year, and the new Fire template has proven to be a critical daily resource aiding interoperability within the Fire services.

WiPSN: With the successful execution of the Milwaukee County WiPSN contract, OASIS will continue to lead the way with regional interoperability within the state of Wisconsin. The OASIS subsystems will gain substantial benefit of increased system flexibility, PSAP hosting capabilities, and advanced features as soon as they become available on the market. By careful planning and design, the OASIS subsystems will also drastically increase in reliability by implementing a redundant cloud-based core, along with quad redundant connections to both the physical and the cloud-based system cores. 2025 marked one full year on the WiPSN.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

APX 7000 Replacement Project

Many Milwaukee County public safety portable radios were end of life and end of support. These assets are used heavily on a daily basis to provide mutual aid communications to and from municipal agencies within the Milwaukee County and surrounding areas. Through a capital project, OEM Radio Division was able to replace MCSO’s APX 7000 radios with new APX Next and N50 radios. These replacements began in 2024 and were completed in 2025, with over 200 radios being replaced and reprogrammed. The new radios come with features, LTE service, and GPS location that will greatly enhance mutual aid communications.

Integration of the City of Milwaukee to OASIS

The City of Milwaukee Open Sky has been linked to the Countywide OASIS system through the use of an ISSI gateway. Since the integration, we have seen a significant rise in interoperability within the Fire services. All municipal fire radios have been reprogrammed to include City of Milwaukee Fire talk groups for mutual aid to the City of Milwaukee. This was a Milwaukee County driven initiative to improve the level of equality in the most underserved communities within Milwaukee County.

August Storms

Milwaukee County experienced a series of storms and a major flooding disaster in August of 2025.

The Radio Division supported the Emergency Operation Center by providing radios for the flood assessment teams. We programmed and issued 145 radios and 2 consolette stations, provided assistance with cache management at the EOC, with issuing radios to members at sign in. One of our radio sites took a direct lightning strike on the water tower that houses the Microwave antennas. The connects to four other sites were affected. Spare equipment was able to get one connection back up within 5 days, making the site operational. The other 3 connections were repaired after new parts arrived.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- OASIS Governance Board
- Cirrus Research Team



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

DIVISION DIRECTOR: DAN POJAR

Mission & Vision OEM-EMS works tirelessly to ensure the highest quality of patient care with a focus on equity, compassion and innovation. The mission aligns with Milwaukee County’s vision to become the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

Service Summary In 2025, the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) division continued to strengthen Milwaukee County’s emergency care system through a combination of operational response, clinical innovation, and expanded community-based care. EMS played a central role in both day-to-day emergency response and large-scale incidents, including the historic August flooding, while continuing to implement programs that improve patient outcomes across the county.

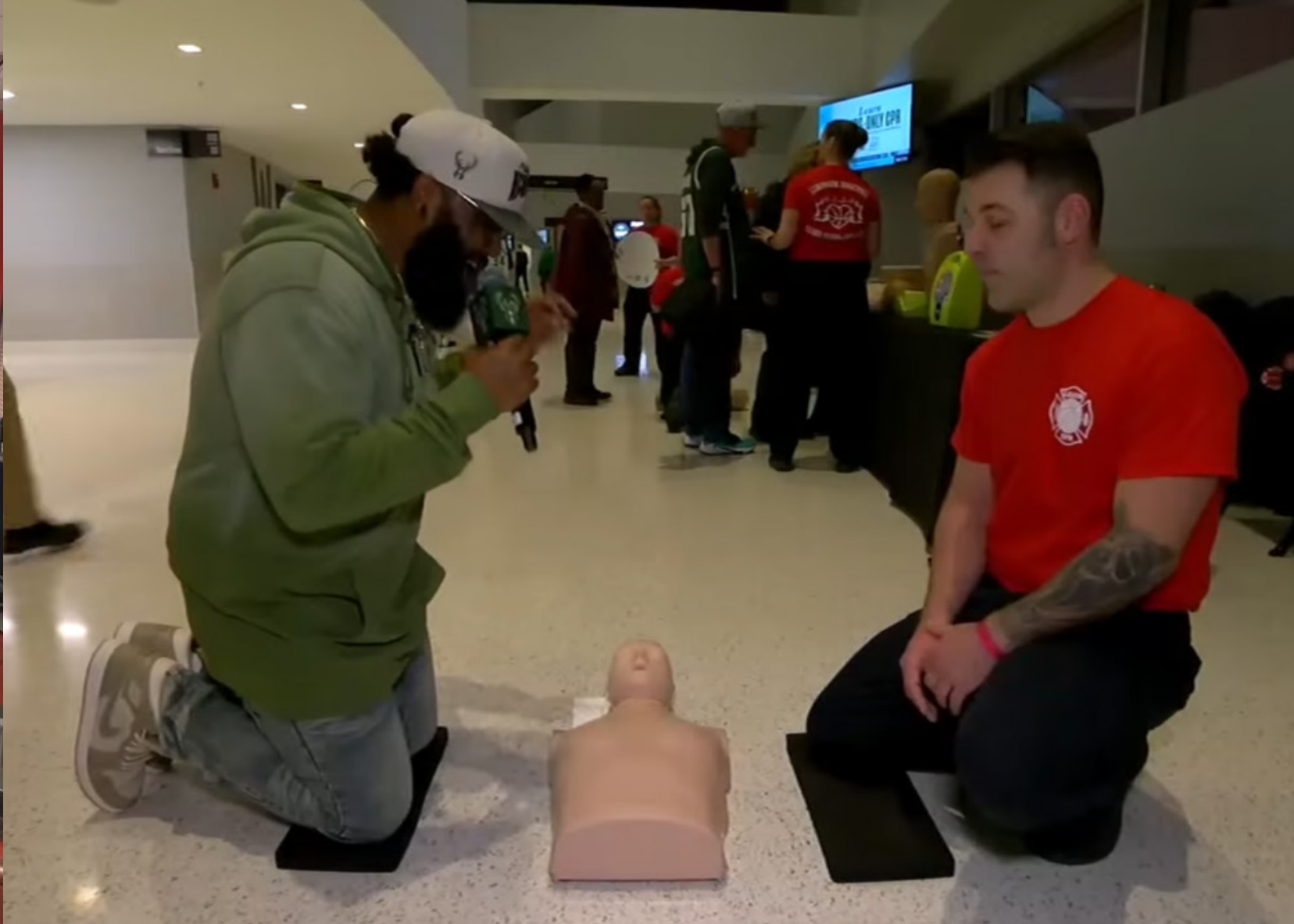
The division’s work focused on expanding access to life-saving interventions in the field, strengthening partnerships with fire departments and healthcare systems, and addressing critical public health challenges such as overdose prevention and behavioral health response. Through continued investment in Mobile Integrated Health, harm reduction, and data-informed strategies, EMS is evolving beyond a traditional emergency response model to better meet community needs.

At the same time, EMS continued to scale innovative programs, including whole blood transfusion in the field and medication-assisted treatment, to position Milwaukee County as a national leader in forward-thinking emergency medical care. These efforts are improving survival rates, reducing strain on the healthcare system, and ensuring that residents receive the right care at the right time.

Responding to Extreme Flooding and Storms

In August, Southeast Wisconsin was hit by historic storms that caused catastrophic flooding across the region. Milwaukee County declared a state of emergency and mobilized departments to support residents, families, and businesses impacted by the disaster.

EMS played an important role within the countywide response, working alongside Emergency Management, municipal partners, hospitals, public health agencies, and state and federal officials to maintain emergency medical readiness during rapidly evolving conditions. EMS teams supported field operations, coordinated patient care across affected areas, and ensured service continuity despite infrastructure challenges.



The broader response helped accelerate the federal assistance process, with FEMA distributing more than \$140 million to tens of thousands of Milwaukee County residents. The event underscored the importance of a coordinated emergency response system and demonstrated EMS’s ability to adapt quickly and effectively during large-scale incidents.

Saving Lives Through Whole Blood in the Field

One of EMS’s most significant achievements in 2025 was the continued expansion of Milwaukee County’s whole blood program. Launched in late 2024, the initiative made Milwaukee County one of the first EMS systems in the nation, and the first in Wisconsin, to deliver whole blood transfusions to critically injured patients in the field.

In its first full year, dozens of patients received whole blood following severe injury and trauma, giving them access to life-saving care before arrival at the hospital.

The program has moved beyond the pilot phase and is now integrated into operations across multiple fire departments.

The program has demonstrated strong clinical impact and operational reliability, including extremely low product waste. Continued coordination with fire departments, healthcare partners, and the Medical College of Wisconsin has strengthened the system’s ability to deliver advanced trauma care when every minute matters.

Combating the Opioid Crisis

EMS continued to play a central role in Milwaukee County’s response to the opioid crisis, supporting prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and outreach efforts across the community.

In 2025, Milwaukee County launched a new Overdose

Dashboard to provide real-time insight into overdose trends and support more targeted response strategies. The County also approved significant additional opioid settlement funding to expand programs focused on prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction.

EMS supported the continued expansion of medication-assisted treatment in the field, creating new opportunities to engage individuals at critical moments and connect them to ongoing care. Several fire departments reported hundreds of outreach attempts and patient contacts, highlighting both the scale of need and the importance of sustained investment in these programs.

By the end of the year, EMS had also laid the groundwork to expand medication-assisted treatment more broadly across the system, while continuing to improve data tracking, integrate social determinants of health into patient assessments, and strengthen coordination with

community-based providers.

Expanding Mobile Integrated Health

Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) remained a key strategy for reaching residents whose needs extend beyond a traditional emergency response. MIH programs focus on proactive, community-based care that connects individuals to resources, reduces unnecessary emergency department visits, and improves long-term outcomes.

In 2025, EMS and its partners made significant progress toward expanding MIH across Milwaukee County. This included building the administrative and operational infrastructure needed to support new programs, creating new positions, developing policies and procedures, and coordinating with fire departments and healthcare partners.

Thousands of patient interactions were supported through MIH programs, with continued reductions in non-fatal overdose calls for service. EMS also established a formal quality improvement structure for MIH and invested in tools and equipment to better connect field teams with dispatch and healthcare systems.

Harm Reduction Education and Community Outreach

EMS continued to expand its community outreach and harm reduction efforts in 2025, providing training, education, and life-saving resources across Milwaukee County.

Thousands of naloxone units were distributed to public safety agencies, community organizations, and local partners. Training efforts reached a wide range of audiences, including county employees, transit staff, nonprofit organizations, and community members, with instruction on overdose response, CPR/AED use, bleeding control, and emergency preparedness.

The CORE Team played a key role in delivering hands-on training and engaging with the public at large venues and community events. These efforts helped expand awareness, increase access to life-saving tools, and empower residents to respond effectively in emergency situations.

Data, Innovation, and System Improvement

Data and technology continued to guide EMS strategy in 2025. The Overdose Dashboard became a widely used public-facing tool and was translated into Spanish to improve accessibility.

EMS data also supported broader public health and safety initiatives, including continued reductions in overdose trends and contributions to Milwaukee County’s Vision Zero efforts to eliminate traffic fatalities. The Motor Vehicle Collision Dashboard was expanded to provide more detailed insights into roadway safety and support targeted interventions.



These efforts reflect EMS’s ongoing commitment to using data to inform decision-making, improve outcomes, and better serve the community.

Workforce Development and Partnerships

EMS continued to invest in workforce development and regional partnerships in 2025. Staff participated in advanced training across clinical care, data analysis, Mobile Integrated Health, and system improvement.

The division strengthened its partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin and continued to support research, clinician development, and system-wide collaboration. New staff additions and expanded roles helped support growing program areas and increased operational demands.

Collaboration remained central to EMS operations, with strong partnerships across fire departments, hospitals, public health agencies, and community organizations ensuring a coordinated and effective system of care.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead to 2026, EMS will continue expanding whole blood availability, Mobile Integrated Health, medication-assisted treatment, and data-driven public health strategies.

The division’s work in 2025 demonstrated the value of combining advanced clinical care with strong partnerships and community-based approaches. These efforts are helping Milwaukee County deliver emergency medical services that are more responsive, more connected, and better equipped to meet the needs of all residents.

2026 PUBLIC MESSAGING AND AWARENESS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT
March 8	Daylight saving time begins (spring safety checks)
March 9 - 13	Wisconsin Flood Safety Awareness Week
April 13 - 17	Severe Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin
April 16	Statewide Tornado Drill (1:45 p.m. & 6:45 p.m.)
May 4 - 8	National Air Quality Awareness Week
May 6	NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Day in Wisconsin
June 3	Heat Awareness Day in Wisconsin
June 23	Wisconsin Lightning Safety Awareness Day
July 4	Independence Day Celebration Safety
September	National Preparedness Month
October	Cybersecurity Awareness Month
November 1	Standard time begins (Fall/winter safety checks)
November 16 – 20	Winter Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin
December 2	Holiday decorating and fire safety

MEDICAL DIRECTION

MEDICAL DIRECTOR: DR. BEN WESTON

Mission & Vision The OEM Medical Direction team supports high-quality emergency medical care through clinical leadership, evidence-based practice, innovation, and continuous improvement. This work advances Milwaukee County's commitment to equitable care and supports the County's vision of becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

Service Summary In 2025, Medical Direction continued to guide clinical practice across Milwaukee County's EMS system, supporting patient care through quality improvement, education, and close coordination with EMS providers, hospitals, and public safety partners.

The team focused on strengthening consistency in care delivery, supporting system-wide innovation, and ensuring that EMS practices reflect the latest evidence-based standards. Through these efforts, Medical Direction plays a critical role in improving patient outcomes and supporting EMS clinicians in the field.

Quality Improvement and Clinical Oversight

Continuous quality improvement remained a central focus in 2025. Medical Direction led structured case reviews and post-incident evaluations to identify opportunities to strengthen care and improve system performance.

These efforts resulted in direct engagement with EMS clinicians and helped drive system-wide improvements, including enhancements to cardiac, stroke, and trauma care processes. Ongoing collaboration with EMS agencies and frontline providers reinforced a culture of learning, accountability, and clinical excellence.

Supporting Innovation in EMS Care

Medical Direction provided clinical leadership for several of EMS's most impactful initiatives, including the continued expansion of the whole blood program and medication-assisted treatment in the field.

Through protocol development, real-time consultation, and oversight, the team ensured that these programs were implemented safely and effectively. Medical Direction also supported the integration of new technologies and clinical practices, helping EMS continue to evolve and expand its capabilities.

Education and Clinician Development

In 2025, Medical Direction continued to support a shift toward clinician development that emphasizes real-world application, collaboration, and continuous learning. Educational efforts increasingly incorporated real cases, simulation training, and direct engagement with EMS providers. Medical Direction worked closely with OEM staff and fire departments to ensure that training reflects current system needs and supports ongoing improvement in patient care.



System Coordination and Partnerships

Collaboration remained a key priority for Medical Direction. The team worked closely with hospital systems, EMS agencies, and regional partners to improve communication, streamline care transitions, and reduce variability across the system.

Medical Direction also supported broader system initiatives, including dispatch optimization, guideline updates, and coordination with specialty teams. These efforts help ensure a more connected and efficient system of patient care across Milwaukee County.

Looking Ahead

Medical Direction will continue to focus on advancing evidence-based care, strengthening quality improvement efforts, and supporting innovation across the EMS system. By aligning clinical leadership with operational priorities, the team will continue to play a critical role in improving patient outcomes and supporting the evolving needs of Milwaukee County's emergency medical services system.



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
**OFFICE OF
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**

633 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 700 | Milwaukee, WI 53233
821 West State Street | Milwaukee, WI 53203

(414) 257-4709

county.milwaukee.gov/en/oem