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*The Phoenix is a monthly newsletter produced by the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs. To submit story ideas, comments, or feedback, please contact Carol Gifford, the editor, at [caqifford@pa.gov](mailto:caqifford@pa.gov)*

## Budget Updates, Legislative News and Recovery Month Kickoff

The state budget negotiations are still continuing. As you know, the FY 2017-18 \$31.9 billion appropriations bill became law without the Governor’s signature. Negotiations continue on the bills needed to provide revenues to balance the state budget, and it’s unclear when that final package, and other initiatives, will be complete.

The Governor’s initiative to unify the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Aging, is still with the General Assembly as part of the budget negotiations. Until such time that a decision is made otherwise, DDAP will continue as a separate department.

A recovery house bill (Senate Bill 446) is still under consideration by the legislature. Provisions in it would give DDAP oversight of recovery houses that receive state funding. DDAP will likely need to certify that recovery houses meet certain standards, and inspect them. Another bill contains language that would require schools to provide instruction in grades 6-12 to prevent opioid abuse, and, if it receives final approval, DDAP would work with the Department of Health to develop curriculum.

Work on Pennsylvania’s CURES grant funding is moving forward. A required assessment is being completed by the DDAP, DOH, and DHS CURES working group, and when submitted and approved, Pennsylvania is expected to receive its \$26 million allotment. The bulk of the money for funding drug and alcohol treatment will be distributed through the single-county authorities, and be used to fund some new initiatives aimed at providing innovative treatment for substance use disorders.

As we near the end of summer, don’t forget to **plan to attend the Wednesday, Sept. 6, statewide kick-off for National Recovery Month scheduled for 10 a.m. in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg.** Bring busloads of people to greet Governor Tom Wolf, and help destigmatize those suffering from SUDs. We want to show Pennsylvanians there is hope in the opioid crisis -- treatment works and leads to living in sustained recovery. Read more about our planned activities inside.

Looking forward to seeing you in September!

Jennifer Smith, Acting Secretary



## State News

### DEA Releases 2016 Pennsylvania Drug Overdose Death Report

Jennifer Smith, acting secretary of the state Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, attended the recent Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Philadelphia field division press conference for the release of the number of 2016 overdose drug deaths in the commonwealth.

The [Analysis of Overdose Deaths in Pennsylvania, 2016](#)

found 4,642 drug-related overdose deaths were reported by coroners and medical examiners in Pennsylvania in 2016, a 37 percent increase in overdose deaths from 2015 and a death rate for 36.5 per 100,000 people. In 2016, approximately 13 people died of a drug-related overdose in Pennsylvania each day.

Other findings included:

- Fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances were identified in 52 percent of deaths, a significant increase from 2015 when fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances were noted in 27 percent of deaths.
- More than 95 percent of counties reporting drug-related overdose deaths in 2016 indicated the presence of fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances.
- Prescription or illegal opioids were identified in 85 percent of the overdose deaths.

These number of overdose deaths is too high, said Smith, and it is important for law enforcement and public safety agencies at all levels of government to work together to combat the epidemic. Naloxone is the key to saving lives so that we can get people into treatment and on the road to recovery, she said. Smith added that the \$26 million in federal CURES grant funding will help the state assess where there are gaps in outreach, treatment and recovery supports, and allow the state to begin new initiatives.

"Governor Tom Wolf is committed to fighting this opioid epidemic at all levels and we will continue to act to prevent the influx of opioids, treat those suffering from the disease of addiction, and help those living in recovery," said Smith.



### Report Finds Decline in Prescription Opioid Misuse Among Young Adults

A new report by the Pennsylvania State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) found a decline in prescription opioid misuse among young Pennsylvanians from 2011 to 2014.

This information is good news," Governor Wolf said. "Youth and young adults appear to understand the significant danger of addiction and possible death from the misuse of opioids."

The [report](#) found a decline in prescription opioid misuse among young Pennsylvanians from 2011 to 2014. Representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs

According to the report in 2011, 10.8 percent of young adult Pennsylvanians (aged between 18 and 25) were estimated to have misused a prescription opioid such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, or others. By 2014, the study found that number declined to 8.7 percent. Among Pennsylvania youths (12- to 17-year-olds), the estimate went from 6 percent to 4.5 percent in the same span.

"This report is an encouraging sign in our fight against the opioid epidemic," DDAP Acting Secretary Jennifer Smith said. "It found a decline in the misuse of prescription opioids among teens and young adults in Pennsylvania that we hope means that we are educating young people about the dangers of opioid use, including addiction."

Based on an analysis of standardized data collected by school districts, the report was conducted by the Dornsife School of Public Health at Drexel University as part of a substance use prevention grant awarded through DDAP. Not all school districts across the state participated in the collection of the standardized data.





## DDAP News

### DDAP Training Schedule for September and October

For those interested in attending upcoming trainings offered by DDAP, please log in to the [DDAP Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) for course details, and registration. TMS can also be found by visiting the DDAP homepage and selecting the TRAINING tab.

- 9/11 to 9/14 - Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training (SAPST), Courtyard Marriot Harrisburg/Hershey (Dauphin County)
- 9/12 - Mini Regional, Quality Inn Franklin (Venango County)
- 9/13 - Mini-Regional Wyndham Pittsburgh (Allegheny County)
- 9/26 - Mini-Regional Mansfield University (Tioga County)
- 10/12 - Mini-Regional DeSales University (Lehigh County)
- 10/23 to 10/27 - Clinical Supervision Training Hampton Inn Grove City (Mercer County)

## County News

### Paint the Town Silver for International Overdose Awareness Day

#### New Castle Plans Inaugural Event



Silver balloons will line streets in New Castle on Aug. 31, as part of the activities for International Overdose Awareness Day. The balloons will set the stage for some additional events

planned that day by the Lawrence County Recovery Coalition, a group of individuals in recovery, parents, district attorney and other governmental representatives who meet monthly to discuss local recovery supports.

“Silver is the color for [International Overdose Awareness Day](#), and we want to see silver line the streets,” said Rebecca Abramson, executive director of Lawrence County Drug and Alcohol, the county’s single-county authority. “Our idea is to use the balloons and ribbons to help raise awareness of overdose, reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, and spread the message that recovery is possible.”

This initiative by the recovery coalition, said Abramson, was spearheaded by Julie Jendrysik, an assistant administrator with Lawrence County’s Drug and Alcohol office. Coalition members visited area businesses to talk to them about the project and ask them to display the balloons and wear silver ribbons. There is no cost to take part in the event.

Each participating business will receive three silver helium balloons, weighed down with an anchor, to display in front of their location, silver ribbons for their employees to wear, explained Abramson. Businesses will also be given Recovery is Real pamphlet packets with information on drug and alcohol providers, halfway houses, 12-step NA and AA meetings, and area pharmacies that stock naloxone.

Community interest is high. “One provider had the idea of giving silver ribbons to all clients who come in that day,” said Abramson. “A local Elks club contacted us and donated funding that will be used to print tee-shirts and buy helium for the balloons.

“District Attorney Joshua Lamancusa is a big supporter of the recovery coalition,” she said. “He supported the formation of our recovery coalition, and gave us the funding to set up its [website](#). He also provided funding for signs to be hung from street lights to bring attention to our recovery coalition, and we added billboards and yard signs for outreach in more rural areas.

Other activities scheduled for the day include a walk at a nearby state park ending in a ceremony with speakers and refreshments, and a release of balloons (latex-free) into the air. “We already have a lot of interest in the event so we’re hoping for a large turnout,” said Abramson.

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## Coming up ...

### International Overdose Recovery Day is August 31

If you are looking for more information on International Overdose Awareness Day (@overdoseday #OverdoseAware2017) on Thursday, August 31, check out the information on International Overdose Awareness Day's [website](#). The goal of the event is to raise awareness of prevention and remembrance. That includes raising awareness of overdoses and reducing the stigma of a drug-related deaths. It also means acknowledging the grief



families and friends experience when their loved ones die or have permanent injuries as a result of a drug overdose.

Register your event or find [events](#) near you, and find resources including an [overdose awareness app](#),

[downloadable resources](#) such as social media, fact sheets and posters, and [badges and wristbands](#).

### National Recovery Month Kick-off:

**Please join us 10 a.m., Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg for the kick-off ceremony of National Recovery Month.**

Ceremony with Governor Tom Wolf and others:

- Photo stations – add your pic to the “Faces of Recovery.”
- Share your recovery stories (in advance, during, and after event by filling out and submitting a [recovery success story](#).)

Help us recognize and celebrate other Pennsylvanians living in recovery from alcohol or substance use disorders addictions!

### Prevention Works. Treatment is Effective. People Recover.

National Recovery Month 2017: *Join the Voices for Recovery: Strengthen Families*



*and Communities* is in September and you are probably busy planning activities for your area.

“National Recovery Month is the time to promote the message: treatment works and recovery is possible,” said Jennifer Smith, acting secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs. “Many of those affected live in long-term recovery, and often want to share the good news with those who may be struggling to make it to recovery.”

Please help spread the word – reach out and invite others to attend the kick-off event on September 6<sup>th</sup> and share the good news of recovery in your community. A [toolkit](#), provided by SAMHSA, provides information, suggested activities, resources, and graphics.

Many events are scheduled throughout the state – please visit and add your events to the Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PRO-A) [calendar](#).

“We want as many people as possible to attend our Sept. 6 Recovery Month state kick-off in Harrisburg,” said Smith. “Help us spread that message and continue to provide recovery supports to those in our communities.”

### Sept. 6 National Recovery Month Kick-Off Updates

Check the status of the planning and events for the Sept. 6 National Recovery Month kick-off event in Harrisburg by checking out a new feature, **More on Mondays**.

Each Monday in August, DDAP will release information on the National Recovery Month kick-off event, sent to all

newsletter subscribers and available to all others on the DDAP website. Check back in on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>!

