

THE PHOENIX

May 2017 | Vol. 1 | Issue 1

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAMS



Contents

Welcome to The Phoenix:	1
A Letter from Jennifer Smith, Acting Secretary, DDAP	1
State News	2
Overdose Deaths Increase	2
Unification to Create New Department.	2
Recovery Houses.....	2
Acting Secretary Jennifer Smith Talks about Drug Take-Back Boxes in Philadelphia.....	2
DDAP News	3
Pa. Get Help Now Helpline.....	3
New Data System Underway	3
HR 590 Report.....	3
DDAP Annual Plan and Report	3
County News	4
Drop-In Recovery Center in Easton.....	4
Coming up	4
September is National Recovery Month	4
What are You Planning?.....	4

Welcome to The Phoenix:

A Letter from Jennifer Smith, Acting Secretary, DDAP

Welcome to the inaugural edition of The Phoenix, a new publication to provide news to you about the state Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP).

Our goal is to provide you with information on what’s happening at the state level that will impact drug and alcohol programs. We will also feature stories and photos from single-county authorities, providers and support groups across the state. If you have an item to share, please send it along to cagifford@pa.gov.

This monthly publication will be distributed to stakeholders via email and posted on DDAP’s website. Feel free to download and share the .pdf file or produce printed copies for others who may be interested in it.

We’d like your feedback. Please let our editor, Carol Gifford, know what you think and about information that you’d like to see in this newsletter.

Thank you for the important work that you do. Your efforts each day are helping to stem the abuse of drugs, alcohol and substance use disorder, and to promote recovery and support it. Together, we can reduce the human and economic impact of the disease.



Jennifer S Smith

Jennifer Smith, Acting Secretary

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 cagifford@pa.gov

Preventing & Reversing Overdose, Accessing Effective & Individualized Treatment, Supporting & Championing Recovery

Manage Subscription

View Classroom/ Training

DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEM?

1-800-662-HELP

GET HELP

www.pa.gov/opioids



Visit our Website Contact Us

View Employment Opportunities





State News

Overdose Deaths Increase

Overdose deaths continue to rise. In 2016, the number of overdose deaths in Pennsylvania (no official numbers out yet) is expected to top 4,500, about a 35 percent increase from the 3,500 overdose deaths in the state in 2015.

In Philadelphia, a reported 907 overdose deaths in 2016 could be eclipsed if numbers from the beginning of 2017 continue. In Dauphin County, the coroner warned recently that overdoses are spiking. The medical examiner in Allegheny County said 613 people died of overdoses in 2016 and more than 60 percent were fentanyl-related deaths.

With the urgency of the opioid epidemic in mind, the state legislature is reviewing proposals that would require more action by doctors before prescribing opioids, provide regulation of recovery houses, and look at ways to compel people who survive overdoses to enter treatment.

Unification to Create New Department

Governor Wolf is proposing the integration of the four health and human service agencies to create a new, unified Department of Health & Human Services.

His proposal would merge the state departments of Aging, Drug and Alcohol Programs, Health and Human Services into a new, unified department designed to provide better access to services and more efficient delivery of services.

Read more about the proposal and see an organizational chart at www.governor.pa.gov/hhs.

Recovery Houses

Recovery houses continue to be in the news. There are several legislative proposals to begin regulation of them, and no word yet on what the General Assembly is likely to do.

Recovery houses are generally defined as houses where people with drug and alcohol issues can live with others and work on a sustained recovery. Some have house managers or professional staff.

Currently, most of the houses are owned by individuals or businesses and not all are providing supportive living environments to those who are working toward sustained recovery. Several bills are being reviewed in the

legislature, and it is likely some form of new regulation for recovery houses will be sent to the Governor's office for his signature.

Acting Secretary Jennifer Smith Talks about Drug Take-Back Boxes in Philadelphia

DDAP Acting Secretary Jennifer Smith and Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Gary Tuggle joined Governor Tom Wolf for a recent press conference in Philadelphia about drug take-back boxes.



Smith said Pennsylvania has created more than 580 drug take-back boxes in its 67 counties. Many are located in local police stations and other public locations, and some businesses like Walgreens, are adding the boxes at their pharmacies.

To find a take-back box location for the disposal of prescription drugs, visit:

<https://apps.ddap.pa.gov/gethelpnow/PillDrop.aspx>.

Smith said since the DDAP drug take-back box initiative began in 2014, there have been more than 237,000 pounds, or 118 tons, of prescription drugs collected and destroyed in Pennsylvania.

Governor Wolf and Smith also formally announced \$200,000 in state funding from the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) for approximately 5,000 naloxone kits to be purchased by the Philadelphia and SEPTA police.



DDAP News

Pa. Get Help Now Helpline

A new toll-free state helpline, 1-800-662-HELP, is available 24/7 for assistance with drug and alcohol problems. Since the program began in November 2016, it has logged more than 10,000 calls.

Pennsylvanians can call and talk to a person who can help with assessments and assistance. Recently-added features were an online chat and teletypewriter (TTY) option. The helpline is staffed by First Choice Health System, Inc., a call center experienced in helping people access behavioral health services.

The helpline can get a person into detox or treatment; the help line assistant will find an available opening while the caller is on the line.

Please help us spread the word about the helpline. You can add it to websites, ad campaigns, and printed materials, such as posters and brochures.

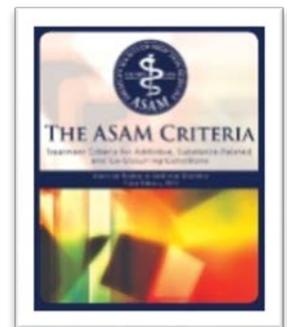
Find out more:

http://www.ddap.pa.gov/treatment/Pages/HR-590_Access_to_Treatment.aspx.

Transition from PCPC to ASAM

The screening tool used in drug and alcohol assessments in Pennsylvania to determine the level of treatment needed is changing.

We are transitioning from the use of the Pennsylvania Client Placement Criteria (PCPC), a custom tool, to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria, a nationally-recognized tool that can be used for both adolescent and adult screenings.



This change is happening to provide more consistency for providers and payers in the treatment system. It will also allow Pennsylvania to apply for a waiver for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) ruling about the Institution for Mental Disease, commonly referred to as the IMD exclusion. The IMD exclusion could limit treatment stays to 15 days per calendar month.

A transition plan is underway (find out more:

<http://www.ddap.pa.gov/Professionals/Documents/ASAM%20FAQs.pdf>) with expected full implementation by July 1, 2018.

DDAP Annual Plan and Report

The Pennsylvania Drug and Alcohol Annual Plan and Report for 2016-2017 is now available at:

<http://www.ddap.pa.gov/Reports/State%20Plan%20and%20Annual%20Reports/2016-2017%20DDAP%20State%20Plan.pdf>

This year's plan is separated into two parts to make it easier to read and understand. The first section is the Annual Plan and report and the second is a supplemental Data Analysis and Outcome Measures.



New Data System Underway

DDAP's new data system, PA WITS, is now live as of May 22, 2017.

The new WITS data system will be used to gather and report Treatment Episode Data System (TEDS) information to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). DDAP is also securing a system to replace its legacy prevention data collection system. For more information visit:

http://www.ddap.pa.gov/Pages/DataSystem_Training.aspx

HR 590 Report

Last year, DDAP was asked by the General Assembly to convene a task force to look at barriers to accessing substance use disorder (SUDs) treatment and benefits.

After a public comment period, seven statewide hearings, and research, the final report is due to be released shortly.



County News

Drop-In Recovery Center in Easton

A new drop-in recovery center called Change on Third St. recently opened in Easton, raising the of drop-in recovery centers to four in Northampton County.



The center provides a place for those in recovery to attend self-help meetings, work on resumes, and socialize with dances, karaoke, television, or take part in the new knitting club.

The opening was attended by several county officials including: from left, Alison Frantz, Director of Human Services; Timothy Munsch, executive director, Lehigh Valley Intake Unit; Judge

Craig Dally; Tiffany Rossanese, Northampton County Drug and Alcohol Administrator; Phillip Chaney, director, Change on Third St.; and Representative Robert Freeman.

Amber Southard appreciates the drop-in center because she said there are not many places where individuals who are recovering from substance use disorder can go to get help.

“One of the biggest things we face in recovery is loneliness,” said Southard, who after entering the drug court program, has been in recovery for 13 months. “You often feel like you have no one to relate to you. Change is uncomfortable and people don’t like feel uncomfortable.”

People in recovery, said Southard, often have to let go of parts of their past because – the people, places, and things are dangerous to them. The drop in center helps provide an easy way to develop new relationships and activities to stabilize recovery.

“We can drop in at any time 9-5, if we have down time,” said Southard, who works as a manager at Pizza Hut. “I spend the majority of my time at work, but I go to the drop-in center for meetings, to meet with my recovery specialist, work on the computer, or just grab a cup of coffee.”

“I’ve made lots of new friends,” said Southard, “I don’t let anyone close to me without my best interests in mind.”

Southard has this advice for newcomers to recovery: if you really want it and go headfirst into recovery, it is possible and within reach.

“Recovery is like being born again. Colors are brighter, smells are different,” said Southard. “It’s been a tough journey, but now I have a huge network of people around me that are able to help.”

Coming up ...

September is National Recovery Month

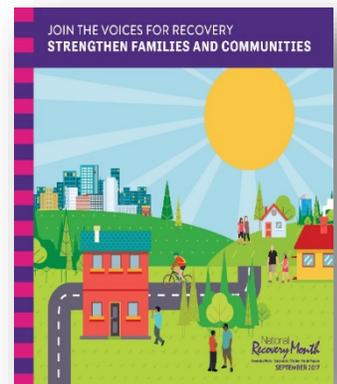
DDAP is planning a statewide kick-off activity – stay tuned for more details. Are you planning activities in your area?

We want to hear from you. If you have county activities planned, please let us know so we can help publicize them.

We want people to know that recovery is possible, and that there are many different ways to begin living with others in sobriety. We want to encourage those living with substance use disorder to get appropriate treatment and recovery supports to join the 23 million Americans who are living in recovery.

This is also an opportunity to educate the disease of addiction and help reduce the stigma attached to it.

What activities are you planning? Please contact Carol Gifford at cagifford@pa.gov to share your events.



What are You Planning?

September is the time to celebrate National Recovery Month. What kind of events are you planning for the month?