Chester County
Department of Drug and Alcohol Services

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VISION
Promote substance use policies and programs that improve the quality of life and reflect the cultural and economic diversity of the community.

MISSION
Ensure that quality substance use intervention and treatment, as well as alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention programs are provided for citizens in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

GOALS
The service delivery system for county residents has been designed to provide comprehensive and accessible care for both adolescents and adults in need of treatment or intervention services and assistance to communities trying to prevent substance use disorder. There are several overriding goals that the Department tries to achieve in the design and delivery of prevention, intervention, case management, and treatment services as listed below:

• Assist communities in becoming their own change agents.

• Increase community recognition of alcohol and tobacco as substances of use/abuse.

• Prevent the continuation of intergenerational family dysfunction due to substance use disorder.

• Promote understanding of the disease concept and the hereditary risk factors associated with substance use disorder.

• Assist clients in creating self-sufficient lives.

• Continuously evaluate the services provided to ensure that they are accessible, high quality, effective, cost efficient and best meet the needs of the citizens of Chester County.
BACKGROUND

The Department of Drug and Alcohol Services was established by the Chester County Commissioners as a Public Executive Commission. The Department serves as the Single County Authority (SCA) for Chester County, responsible for the planning, coordination, and administration of community substance use prevention, intervention, and treatment services. The Department also provides case management services.

The work of the Department is accomplished with the assistance of the Chester County Advisory Council, whose members are appointed by the Commissioners. Members are community volunteers who advise the Department on community needs, planning and management of resources and services. FY 2020/21 Advisory Council membership was:

- Cindy Wanamaker, Chairperson
- Robert Strauber, Jr., Vice Chairperson
- Catherine O’Donnell, Secretary
- John Gailey, Member-At-Large
- Kevin Kelly, Member-At-Large
- Claire Ballantyne, Member-At-Large
- Anthony Paul, Member-At-Large
- Elizabeth Dean, Member-At-Large
- Norman Pine, Member-At-Large
- Mark Evans, Member-At-Large
- Leighton Forbes, Member-At-Large

The three (3) persons Board of Commissioners is the governing entity responsible for oversight of the Department. The Department is part of Chester County’s human services departments, overseen by Human Services Director, Pat Bokovitz.

Most prevention, intervention and treatment services are provided via subcontracts developed and monitored by the Department. The Department also conducts regular needs assessments and develops plans for services.

In addition to planning and administrative activities, the Department also provides some direct case management and prevention services. Case management services include initial assessment for incarcerated individuals and ongoing case management for all residential clients. Prevention services include, but are not limited to, information dissemination and environmental strategies. The staff of the Department was:

- Vincent H. Brown, Executive Director
- Jamie Johnson, Deputy Director

Administrative Unit
- Todd Bender, Program Specialist II
- Kathy Collier, Program Specialist II
- Kaitlyn Genthert, Prevention Specialist
- Mary Jo Nickel, Fiscal Technician
- Heather Revere, Fiscal Officer III
- Nicholas Dello Buono, Fiscal Officer II
- Cathy Vaul, Program Specialist II
- Betty Wade, Administrative Officer I

Case Management Unit
- Sylvia Naula, Case Manager
- Rita McGuane, Treatment Court Specialist
- Kathryn Kinsley, Case Management Supv.
- Emily Bodtke, Case Manager
- Gretchen Medrow, Case Manager
- Thomas Siolek, Program Specialist I
SCA CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Striving to ensure ease of access, Chester County has a decentralized system for entry to funded treatment, regardless of the level of care needed. The primary points-of-entry for funded treatment are our five (5) subcontracted outpatient providers located in Coatesville, Exton, Kennett Square, Phoenixville, and West Chester. Each of these providers will screen for emergent needs upon initial contact and then see the individual to conduct an assessment to determine, with the individual, the type of treatment (level of care) most appropriate.

For those individuals in need of residential treatment, the program will work with our Case Management Unit to determine the most appropriate program and arrange for treatment funding. Following admission to residential treatment, our Case Management Unit will follow the individual to assist with case management needs and ensure continuity of care.

In addition to entry via our outpatient providers, individuals can be assessed at the Chester County Prison with recommendations for level of care made to the presiding criminal justice agency.

For individuals in need of emergency care, withdrawal management admission can happen prior to assessment as appropriate. While in withdrawal management, the individual will be assessed to determine the appropriate treatment referral.

DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the ongoing management of prevention, intervention, and treatment system for Chester County, some of the Department’s other accomplishments include the following:

Administrative

- Ensured all services continued to be available and funded despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the Department functions continued to be completed remotely.

- Continued the Narcan “leave-behind” project, which focuses on providing substance use disorder education to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers and providing Narcan and resource information to families of overdose survivors they served.

- Received and managed $542,959 of Federal and State opioid specific funds, providing and/or enhancing prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services, to residents suffering from an opioid use disorder.

- Provided financial assistance to contracted outpatient providers to help mitigate the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure their sustainability and the continuation of services.

- Continued our extensive collaboration with state agencies, County departments and community-based organizations throughout the year, to mitigate the impact of the opioid and overdose epidemic on individuals, families, and communities. Efforts included prevention, intervention, treatment recovery support and harm reduction strategies.
Hosted and/or participated in over 74 community outreach events throughout the County involving a broad range of substance use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment, and treatment related topics.

Collaborated with the County District Attorney’s Office and the State Attorney General’s Office in the development of protocols and initiation of a County Law Enforcement Treatment Initiative (LETI). The initiative, which began in March 2022, utilizes an approach with a focus on reducing criminal behavior and improving public safety by connecting individuals with a substance use disorder with treatment and other community resources.

To date, the LETI program has:

- Received 30 referrals from Law Enforcement Officers
- Referred 26 individuals to Treatment
- 23 individuals (88%) were admitted to treatment services

Developed and sent out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a recovery house in Phoenixville. Reviewed all proposals, selected a new recovery house provider, Motivation-Vitality-Perseverance (MVP) Recovery, and worked to transition services from the previous provider. The recovery house is poised to be licensed and operational in early FY 22/23.

Continued to partner with our behavioral health managed care organization and the Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) to increase the number of certified peer specialists (CPS) and certified recovery specialists (CRS) in Chester County through the Peer Support Expansion Initiative (PSEI).

Hosted/presented numerous trainings throughout the year to County staff, community organizations, schools, township officials and others. Topics included: Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Overview, American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Criteria, Eliminating Stigma for the Substance User, Case Management Skills, and Confidentiality.

The Department continued to update and evolve our electronic resources and ways to access them in response to the needs created by COVID-19 pandemic, and the way many people are accessing information in a virtual world.

**Treatment**

Provided a full continuum of treatment services, through over 70 contracted providers throughout Pennsylvania, to meet the individual needs of our clients.

Identified and partnered with a contracted provider to bring substance use disorder services into the Phoenixville area. Holcomb Behavioral Health Phoenixville, a Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Program licensed treatment provider will begin service delivery August 1, 2022, at 1041 W. Bridge Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460.

Provided funding for a full time Spanish speaking staff position at an outpatient provider (OP), with plans to expand this assistance to additional OP providers.
Case Management

- Completed 498 assessments in the Chester County Prison and facilitated the referral and placement of approximately 220 inmates in residential treatment.

- Continued to provide funding for an Administrative Case Manager at each of the four (4) In-County contracted outpatient points-of-entry. The Administrative Case Managers assisted clients with Medical Assistance applications, life skills, and developing Recovery Plan goals; thereby allowing the clinical staff to offer more direct treatment and assessment services.

- Hired a bilingual case manager in the Department’s case management unit.

- Created and filled a Program Specialist I position because of the increase in inter-departmental and inter-systems work and collaboration that the Department has incurred over the past several years.

Recovery Support

- Continued expansion of the Community Outreach Prevention and Education (COPE) program, which provides 24/7 outreach, engagement and personal support, referrals for treatment services, and the distribution of Narcan®, to overdose survivors and their families in, all local hospital emergency departments.

  The following data reflects COPE team referrals for FY 21/22:
  - Received and responded to 476 referrals.
  - Engaged 476 individuals in the hospitals.
  - 339 individuals (71%) admitted to substance use disorder treatment services.
  - Provided 100 doses of Narcan to survivors and their loved ones.

- Beginning April 2022 expanded COPE services to hospital medical floors, which resulted in 34 referrals to the team. Many of these referrals required additional coordination/outreach with medical professionals to meet physical health needs.

- The SCA and its managed care partner Community Care Behavioral Health (CCBH) continued to work with The Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA), the provider of Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) services in Chester County, to ensure program viability and delivery of quality service.

  The following data reflects programming for FY 21/22:
  - 23 different referral sources.
  - 245 individuals referred for CRS services.
  - 25 individuals/family members referred by CYF for specialized/enhanced CRS services.
  - 7,448 units/1,862 hours of recovery coaching and mentoring delivered in the community.
Successful continuation of the Recovery Rapid Re-Housing Program (RRR) launched in March 2019. This is a collaborative effort with the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, Department of Community Development and Human Services, Inc. to deliver Rapid Re-Housing services for individuals with Substance Use Disorder. Services include Housing Case Management and funding to assist with security deposits/move-in costs and up to 6 months of rental assistance for those who apply and qualify for assistance.

The following data reflects RRR for FY 21/22:

- 23 referrals.
- 19 individuals received Case Management Services, assisting with linkages/budgeting/childcare/employment/resources to prepare for housing.
- 9 individuals were approved for housing subsidy.
- 2 individuals were successfully housed. An additional 4 individuals are in the process and 3 other households are still searching for housing.
- $8552 was expended for housing costs.

This program continues to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; specifically, housing units are not turning over given the state/federal moratorium on evictions. Affordable housing units are not readily available. There is also strong competition for units when they do become available. The Recovery Rapid Re-Housing program staff continue to accept referrals and work with individuals in their search for safe/affordable housing.

Prevention/Intervention

- Piloting of Elementary Student Assistance Programming (ESAP)
  - COVID-19 funds used to develop Elementary Student Assistance Programming
  - Three schools with trained teams began piloting the process in March
  - Plan is to scale up to have full county coverage

- Night of Light
  - Over 60 people came together to remember those lost to substance use disorders and bring hope to those working toward long term recovery.
  - The evening featured speakers, resource tables and a ceremony to remember the lives lost to substance use.

- Countywide Prevention Messaging and Collaboration
  - SCA regularly met with the Chester County Prevention Providers to promote collaboration, sharing of resources and countywide messaging.
  - With the virtual world, there are many opportunities for collaboration at events, other areas of the community to attend presentations within another school district as there is not commute involved.
  - Prevention providers have greatly increased in the sharing on resources on social media platforms to increase community engagement. Providers in one area of the county can share their community resources from another area of the county with ease.
Website Updates

- In keeping with the evolution of the virtual world, Prevention staff have updated prevention information on both the county departmental website and the Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force website.

Internal Monthly Prevention Email

- To increase awareness around prevention services and initiatives in the county, prevention staff distributes a monthly prevention email to other departmental staff which highlights an awareness campaign, prevention provider and how to connect to resources.

Cross departmental collaboration on mental health and wellness initiatives

- Prevention staff actively participate in the Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force, the Chester County Adverse Childhood Experience’s (ACE’s) coalition, and the Chester County Tobacco Free coalition which fosters an increase in information dissemination and bolsters relationships.
- As part of the county’s wellness initiative offered through the Human Resources department, staff presented an opioid epidemic training to increase awareness and education of county staff of the opioid epidemic and available resources in the county.
- 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) administration to more than 17,000 Chester County youth in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. Significant reduction in several areas of substance use but continuing upward trends in areas surrounding mental health. Working with Mental Health/Intellectual Development Disabilities (MH/IDD) and (Student Assistance Programming) SAP trainers and liaison providers to continue to support schools and communities.

CHALLENGES

In addition to the many accomplishments achieved by the Department, there were also various challenges faced throughout the year.

- Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, services were directly and drastically impacted to include, but not limited to navigating the ever-changing landscape of service delivery, restrictions, and closures, maintaining best practices while making adaptations for virtual service delivery, consumers not utilizing printed materials and instead access information on the internet and introducing and onboarding new providers.

- The SCA, in conjunction with Chester County and the State of Pennsylvania, has continued its worked to ensure that clients can access services and treatment in a safe and healthy manner to reduce the potential exposure to COVID-19. The SCA continues to work with providers in developing and enhancing tele-health services and maintained the reduced restrictions on providers that would otherwise create barriers to clients in need of services. Chester County SCA continued offering its temporary financial relief to its In-County outpatient and assessment providers to keep the “front door” to treatment open as well as aftercare treatment for those individuals returning to their communities from residential treatment.
The SCA continued to manage the virtual/hybrid/ever-changing school schedules landscape. Growth is slowly being seen in SAP services but is somewhat stagnant in Prevention services.

Multiple initiatives, including those from the Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services/Managed Care Organization (OMHSAS/MCO), PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), Department of Health, and others that can/do impact various aspects of our system and require attention/understanding/involvement of department staff.

Creating consistent programming and service levels with changing in funding and the parameters as set by the funding source.

The Department and contracted prevention, intervention and treatment providers continued to face turnover and understaffing.

(Due to an increase in COVID-19 in the prison, for a quarter of the year, residential placements from the prison were held to reduce the spread of COVID to the community. Assessments were limited to priority based and resorted back to tele-communication access only.)
A YEAR IN REVIEW

TRENDS
The following are some Countywide trends identified through data related to Department funded and/or contracted services.

- Chester County has seen a continued downward trend in opiate/opioid use as well as slight decrease in benzodiazepine and other sedative use for individuals entering treatment. The most significant increase from the prior fiscal year has been with marijuana use. There has been a slight decline in the use of psychostimulants which includes methamphetamines within the same timeframe.

- Chester County is seeing an increase in use of Xylazine, a drug often mixed with opioids (and unknown to the user) which can impact the severity of detox symptomology as well as increase the risk of an overdose. Some individuals need 1-2 more days in a withdraw management program, or additional medications to properly detoxify from the substance.

- The opiate abuse and overdose epidemic continues in the County, as do the efforts to respond to this crisis. Our department is involved in numerous activities, many of which focus on public awareness and education on overdoses/deaths and the availability of Naloxone; ensuring clients can access appropriate treatment services; and participation in various collaborations with other community agencies and organizations, including the Overdose Prevention Task Force (ODTF).

- Chester County accidental overdose deaths have remained constant for the last few years, which remains unchanged in 2021. Based on data available for calendar year 2021, 109 deaths were reported. This is in comparison to 101 in calendar year 2020, 104 deaths in calendar year 2019, and 112 deaths in calendar year 2018.

- “Harm Reduction” trainings and discussion becoming more prevalent.

- Increasing requests by schools, communities, and families for co-occurring services.

CLIENT STATISTICS
Included below, are client statistics for the 2021/22 fiscal year:
As a result of the Affordable Healthcare Act, the Medicaid Expansion, older children remaining on their parents' health insurance and COVID-19, the Department funded, client numbers for the '21-'22 fiscal year continued their downward trend from prior years.

- Number of unduplicated clients who received funded drug and alcohol services for all levels of care and activities: 1,370
- Number of unduplicated admissions to withdrawal management: 55
- Number of unduplicated admissions to residential treatment: 215
- Number of unduplicated clients funded in outpatient, intensive outpatient and partial hospitalization treatment, including methadone and other medication assisted treatment (all services): 1,135

**TRAININGS**

Below is a list of training needs identified by the Chester County SCA in collaboration with its stakeholders and provided by Chester County SCA for FY21/22.

- Assessor Training for Chester County
- Substance Use Disorder 101
- Medication Assisted Treatment Overview
- American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)
- Partnered with Good Fellowship Training & EMS Institute to deliver nine (9) community Naloxone trainings reaching nearly 300 residents.
- Partnered with the Chester County Department of Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities and the Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force to train nearly 60 residents on the suicide prevention training, Question Persuade Refer (QPR).

**Naloxone Trainings**
- As the opioid epidemic continues to present challenges and many lives are lost to accidental overdose, the department continues to collaborate with Good Fellowship Ambulance and Training Institute on the delivery of a Community Naloxone Training.
- The training briefly covered the opioid epidemic, what Narcan is, how to recognize and respond to an overdose and lastly, accessing drug and alcohol services in the county.

**County Staff Wellness Presentation on the Opioid Epidemic**
- As part of the county’s wellness initiative offered through the Human Resources department, staff biannually presented an opioid epidemic training to increase awareness and education of county staff of the opioid epidemic and available resources in the county.

**Prevention with Purpose**
- To increase awareness around prevention services in the county, prevention staff presented to other county departments an overview of prevention services and how to access said services.
FISCAL INFORMATION

Total Revenue for the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services for FY 21/22 was $5,415,967. Revenue Sources included federal funding streams, PA State Base, PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD), Human Service Block Grant Fund (HSBG), Chester County matching funds, and other miscellaneous sources (Interest, Office of Managed Behavioral Health (OMBH), Drug Court and Criminal Justice).
These services are made possible by the Chester County Commissioners, Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Some data for use in this report were obtained through the county’s contract with the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs. The Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs specifically disclaim responsibility for any analysis, interpretations, or conclusions therein.

Subcontracting agencies also receive contributions from local United Way chapters, foundations, and private donations.