

# **CENTER FOR RURAL PENNSYLVANIA - PUBLIC HEARING HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION TREATMENT AND RECOVERY**

July 29, 2015

The Commonwealth Medical College  
Medical Sciences Building  
525 Pine Street  
Scranton, PA 18509

## **Testimony of:**

- **Shane Scanlon**, Deputy District Attorney, Lackawanna County
  - Chief of the Narcotics / Gun Crime Unit

## **INTRODUCTION:**

- Thank you to the esteemed panel and Senator Yaw for arranging this hearing
- Credentials and qualifications

## **BACKGROUND ON HEROIN IN LACKAWANNA COUNTY:**

- In 2007, heroin was much less prevalent, less available, much more expensive
- In 2007, a bag of heroin cost \$25. Now, we average \$10, and the dealer has bought for as low as \$3.
- Direct correlation of prescription drug abuse to heroin
- Population of Lackawanna County
  - 2013 – 214,000
- Used to be excited over 50 bags of heroin and move to a press conference
- Stats:
  - Overdose death approximately every 5 days
  - 2013 – 51 deaths
  - 2014 – 35 deaths

## **LACKAWANNA COUNTY'S EPIDEMIC:**

- **WHY?** Availability. In between source cities: Philadelphia, portions of New York and New Jersey
  - Major highways run right through Scranton including 81, 380, 84 and the turnpike
- Ties to violent crime:
  - Turf wars, sales of counterfeit substances, gangs, robbery (drug houses)
  - Quality of life – theft, property, burglary – all related to heroin, drug addiction
- Prescription Drug Abuse
  - Certain doctors are overprescribing, directly correlated to heroin
  - Availability of prescription drugs in homes

- Theft/burglary – very similar to heroin

#### WHAT LACKAWANNA COUNTY HAS DONE:

- We are **Proactive**
  - LCDA – full time drug unit
  - SPD, SID – full time drug unit
  - State Police Vice/interdiction
  - Drug cases
  - Controlled buys – progress up the supply chain
  - Try to stop the spread of drugs
- LUDET – Lackawanna Unit Drug Enforcement Team
  - A unit that goes beyond dedicated drug units
  - Funded by the AG's office through the DA's office
  - Works specifically at countering drugs throughout the county
- Treatment Court:
  - Judge Barrassé
  - Started in 2000
    - 525 grads
    - 240 terminated
    - Currently 284 participants
    - 94% retention in program
    - 89.2% retention in treatment
    - 2.7% recidivism while in program
    - 11% recidivism rate after graduation from the program
  - Very effective, roughly 18 month program - Post-plea Rehabilitative Court
    - If the defendant does everything right, out in 18 months
    - 4 phases of a step down program
    - Actually tries to teach participants how to live again, drug free
    - Crime as well as treatment
    - Covers entire lives of participants including:
      - Parenting, education, employment, training
      - Addiction treatment, AA meetings, sponsors, home groups
      - Sometimes provide funding for housing
- Prescription drug drop-boxes
  - 1180 pounds collected since February 2014
  - 5-6 throughout county
  - Plus mobile drop box

#### NALOXONE:

- Naloxone is available to first responders now
- Officers using it since March 2015
  - 16 municipalities and the DA's office have access to it
- 4 saves

- 2 in Scranton
- 1 in Olyphant
- 1 DA
- Saves may increase if publicized – no prosecution to those calling to save
- Sponsored by the Lackawanna County/Susquehanna County Drug Commission DA's office and Marworth

WISH LIST:

- Drug Mandatory Minimums
  - People who profit over others addictions should not be on the streets
    - Especially since dealers are carrying firearms
      - Creates safety issue: puts officers stopping these individuals in serious danger
  - Most dealers are non-users themselves & carry weapons
- More prescription drug monitoring to find doctor shoppers
  - We need **responsible prescribers**
  - Educate doctors on the signs that they are supporting addiction through complaints of chronic pain
- Insurance companies to pay for long term drug treatment
- Drug education all through school
  - Fund D.A.R.E. programs
- Funding for more officers
- Treatment
  - Simple economics – supply and demand
- Treatment courts
- Focus on money being in treatment/ treatment courts