

## **Confronting the Heroin/Opioid Epidemic in Pennsylvania – April 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Good morning, I am Derin Myers (Director, PCCD/Office of Financial Management and Administration). I appreciate the opportunity to be here today on behalf of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and our Chairman Josh Shapiro. I would like to highlight just some of the efforts PCCD, in conjunction with the Wolf Administration, have undertaken in response to the Heroin/Opioid Epidemic**

**The mission of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency is ... To enhance the quality, coordination and planning within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, to facilitate the delivery of services to victims of crime, and to increase the safety of our communities. PCCD administers a number of state and federal funding streams in support of this mission.**

We believe that the opioid epidemic is not only a public health issue but also an issue of public safety. PCCD is in a unique position to bring together law enforcement, the medical community and allied professionals to tackle this issue. To that end, PCCD, in collaboration with the PA State Police, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, the County Commissioners Association of PA, the PA District Attorneys Association, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, the Physician General, as well as many others, hosted a symposium on January 27 of this year with county-based teams being invited to participate in discussions related to the scope of the problem, prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies and interagency strategic planning. This was the largest

meeting on this topic that has taken place in PA with **57 of 67** being represented.

Our goal is to educate county leaders on strategies that work, help them develop strategies that best fit their communities, and then assist them with both technical support and grant funding to implement those strategies. This will include the issuing of a **\$3 million competitive funding announcement** this summer to assist counties in the implementation of evidence based practices and programs that address the needs identified through their strategic planning processes.

This is all in addition to our work with Criminal Justice Advisory Boards (CJABs) throughout the Commonwealth. We work closely with CJABS and all of our state partners to identify resources and strategies that will assist local jurisdictions in addressing all issues which impact the health and safety of our communities, including opioid abuse.

Through collaboration with state and local partners PCCD has made resources available for a wide-range of initiatives to address the epidemic. These include:

**Drug Drop Off Boxes.** We have awarded funds to the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association for the purchase of drug drop-off boxes to be placed throughout the Commonwealth to curtail access to opioids. Counties across the state have literally disposed of thousands of pounds of prescription drugs that were collected from those boxes.

**Support for the distribution of Life-saving Naloxone** – PCCD provided funding to the Chiefs of Police Association and other agencies to pay for

naloxone kits to be carried by local law enforcement agencies, first responders and medical professionals.

**Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT)** – PCCD has been working with the PA Department of Corrections to support the use of Vivitrol with inmates returning to their communities. Vivitrol can be used to treat both opioid and alcohol dependence by helping to ease drug cravings.

**Stop Opioid Abuse Campaign (PaStop.org)** – This project is operated by the Commonwealth Prevention Alliance and is intended to Educate Pennsylvanians about the risks of prescription painkiller and heroin use, the relationship between painkillers and heroin use, and what to do when you need help.

**Evidence-Based Prevention** - PCCD's works with state and local partners to improve the Commonwealth's juvenile justice system and prevent violence, delinquency, substance abuse and other related problem behaviors.

The demand for programs and interventions that are effective in preventing adolescent problem behaviors has never been greater. PCCD has a record of leading the development and implementation of approaches that have proven successful in preventing youth violence, delinquency, substance abuse, educational failure and many other problem behaviors. If these behaviors go unchecked, greater risk-taking, such as opioid experimentation can occur.

Primary to this approach is the **Communities that Care**, risk-focused prevention framework. Stephanie Bradley will speak more about this during her presentation but this model relies on the identification of certain key

factors in the life of a child that places the child at increased risk of a myriad of adolescent problem behaviors.

Since 1989, the Commonwealth has assisted communities in identifying these factors through the facilitation of the biennial Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS). The survey is administered to school students in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades with the information being collected contributing to community leaders overall assessment of the communities risks and resources.

The 2015 PAYS was funded by PCCD, DDAP and PDE and this funding allowed for the administration to be free of charge.

To provide ongoing technical assistance and support to communities to assist them in the planning for and implementation of evidence-based substance abuse prevention and intervention programs, PCCD, in partnership with the Department of Human Services supports the **Penn State University's EPISCenter** (Evidenced Based Prevention and Intervention Support Center)

PCCD has maintained a long and successful partnership with the Prevention Research Center at Penn State University. Dr. Stephanie Bradley, the Managing Director of the EPISCenter is here today to provide more details on the work of the EPISCenter.

Finally, PCCD and DHS have partnered with the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy's Program Evaluation Research Unit (PERU) to establish a **Technical Assistance Center (TAC)** that will assist and provide effective Overdose Prevention strategies to counties. Dr. Jan Pringle, the project director, will provide a more detailed description of this effort.

**Thank you for the opportunity to speak about some of PCCD's effort to address this issue and I look forward to your questions**