

Preventing Substance Abuse

Substance abuse—no matter its cause—requires strong state, county and local partnerships to provide effective education, prevention and treatment programs in our communities.

Pennsylvania continues to face high rates of overdose and death due to the opioid epidemic. In fact, the commonwealth was in a declared state of emergency to combat the crisis through all of 2018, highlighting the ongoing seriousness of the issue.

Federal, state and local agencies have come together to make progress over the past several years, partnering to improve coordination and collaboration and develop a more integrated approach. While these efforts must continue, counties also recognize that it is not only opioids that are affecting public health; heroin and cocaine remain significant concerns, as do the use and misuse of prescription drugs and alcohol.

County drug and alcohol programs, run by Single County Authorities (SCAs), are responsible for developing and implementing prevention, intervention and treatment programs. The SCAs work with community stakeholders to assess local circumstances and develop an array of programs that meet the individual needs of each community.

SCAs and counties must continue to work with hospitals and other organizations to comprehensively address substance abuse in all of its forms. Best practices and evidence-based programs must be encouraged, with a focus on primary prevention and quality assurance.

Beyond that, Pennsylvania also needs to work toward a broad and inclusive data system that removes the barriers to information sharing. In this way, state and local stakeholders will be able to see the impact of investments in education, prevention and treatment measures, and assure accountability.

Counties will continue to work in partnership with the commonwealth to ensure coordination of local and statewide strategies and comprehensive solutions to this public health crisis. Only through integrated and holistic planning, coupled with additional resources to expand local capacity, can Pennsylvania begin to reverse its alarming substance abuse trends.



COUNTIES SUPPORT:

- Collaboration among state and local authorities to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to addressing substance abuse in all its forms.
- Additional state resources for increased local capacity for prevention, intervention and treatment.
- Improved data collection to assure resources are appropriately directed to where they are most needed.



THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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