
The Exchange

Winter 2002 - 2003

A Publication of the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services

Message From the Director



As we approach the New Year it is a good time to reflect on where we are in addressing the issue of alcohol and other drug addiction and abuse. There have been many areas of progress that have improved services and increased the potential for long term positive outcomes. At the same time we continue to face significant challenges with the potential to do great harm.

We now benefit from a vast amount of scientific knowledge about alcoholism and addiction. This includes information on the risk and protective factors that influence the development of problems as well as the brain chemistry of addiction. We also have a significant amount of research based knowledge about what prevention and treatment strategies increase the potential for success and we can apply these in our programming. There is extensive research on the health and financial toll untreated alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction takes on individuals, families, and communities. Studies consistently demonstrate the cost benefit of treatment across a number of areas.

Pennsylvania has much to be proud of, legislatively. We have one of the best insurance laws in the nation, Act 106, which mandates minimum treatment benefits to all insured Pennsylvanians. Recognizing the role that addiction plays in dependency on social programs and crime, we also have Act 152, providing Medical Assistance coverage for residential drug and alcohol treatment. When welfare reform was enacted locally, they recognized that individuals in need of drug and alcohol treatment would fall through the cracks and remain in a cycle of dependency. This led to the creation of the Behavioral Health Special Initiative safety net funding to address this problem.

Unfortunately we still face many challenges. While we have Act 106, it is not enforced. This point was illustrated again and again in legislative hearings held over the last year on this issue; and remedies still need to be established. In addition to untold individuals, many of them children, not getting the treatment they are entitled to, the lack of enforcement has also begun eroding our treatment system. Adolescent services are slowly disappearing. Though we have Act 152 Medical Assistance coverage for residential addiction treatment (rehab) it has never been fully implemented and many eligible individuals are still unable to access treatment.

Even with the overwhelming body of knowledge on the impact of alcohol and other drug abuse and the effectiveness of prevention and treatment, public funding and policy setting continues to be insufficient and/or fragmented. A study by the Columbia University Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse found that only 3.7% of the funds states spend on substance abuse are for prevention, treatment, and research while 95.3% is spent addressing the consequences.

The National Governors Association recently issued a policy brief that recognized that substance abuse policy is often fragmented. Within Pennsylvania, multiple Departments are responsible for drug and alcohol policy and services with no high level authority with the authority and responsibility to coordinate policy and resources. Drug and alcohol stakeholder groups across the state are recommending that a Cabinet level position be created to insure consistent, cost-effective, coordinated policies are in place. This position is one of the recommendations of the National Governor's Association. As we move into 2003 we will continue to pursue and take advantage of knowledge gains. We will also continue to address the challenges with the goal of preventing alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction whenever possible and, providing effective services to benefit individuals, families, and communities when it does exist.

Kim P. Bowman

Director, Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services

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Have a Safe and Healthy New Year!

From all the staff at The Chester County Department of Drug & Alcohol Services

CHESTER COUNTY PREVENTION PLANNING 2003/2004

The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services recently completed a series of six Focus Groups designed to assist the Department in setting goals and priorities to reduce the risk of substance abuse for residents of Chester County. Focus Groups were held across the County and were comprised of individuals representing a cross section of our community including local government, law enforcement, community coalitions, businesses, faith-based organizations, school personnel, parents, youth, etc.

A total of 125 individuals completed a Prevention Risk Assessment Survey designed by the PA Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs. This survey instrument identified 22 researched-based risk factors, and their associated problems, that significantly contribute to substance abuse. Risk factors are defined as characteristics that increase the likelihood that a person will engage in a problem behavior, in this instance substance use/abuse. Examples of research-based risk factors for substance abuse include the following: Availability of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs, Susceptibility to Peer Influence, Family History of Substance Use/Abuse and Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization.

The survey instrument organized risk factors into four domains: Community, School, Individual/Peer and Family. Participants were asked to rate each risk factor which, based on their professional and/or personal experience, were the most severe in Chester County. Additionally, respondents identified age groups that they felt were most impacted by the risk factors.

Information generated from the surveys and combined with other resources will be analyzed and reviewed by the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services. Based on the review, risk factors will be prioritized and a comprehensive, scientifically sound alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention plan will be developed for the County with services beginning July 1, 2003.

Our thanks to all of those who were kind enough to support our Department in this process; we appreciate your time and commitment to the County's ongoing prevention efforts.

In View



In View is a regular column in this newsletter. Each issue features a program or an issue that is covered in depth. Ideas are welcome!

The Chester County Department of Drug & Alcohol Services is pleased to Welcome Gaudenzia Inc. into its Network of Outpatient and Partial Hospitalization Treatment Providers

After a competitive Bidding Process that took place last spring, the Department awarded a contract to Gaudenzia Inc. for drug and alcohol assessments and outpatient treatment services to adults and adolescents in Chester County. Gaudenzia has now established a new facility, located at 110 Westtown Road, Suite 115, West Chester PA, 19382. Interested parties may call the Program Director there at 610-429-1414 for more information.

The contract also includes outreach and support efforts including visits to the St. Agnes Day Room and co-facilitation of a "double-trouble" group at the Community Crossroads Consumer Drop-in Center (double-trouble groups twice a week). Gaudenzia West Chester also offers staff support to individuals who are in "Drug Court".

Gaudenzia was founded in 1968 and now operates 38 treatment and prevention programs in 26 locations in Pennsylvania. In Chester County, Gaudenzia Inc. also runs two residential treatment programs.

The new location in West Chester is convenient to area residents and can provide services to people who are eligible for Medical Assistance (HealthChoices) or funded by the Chester County Department of Drug & Alcohol Services. Gaudenzia also accepts payments from Commercial Insurance, or from the client (on a sliding fee scale). Once again, we welcome the staff of Gaudenzia West Chester.

To help you determine the appropriate route of access for your situation, the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services funds a 24-hour, toll free Information and Referral Line:

1-866-ATOD-SOS (1-866-286-3767)

New Report Shows Parents Unaware of Children's Ecstasy Use - 10/22/2002

Excerpts from Press Release...Partnership for a Drug-Free America

405 Lexington Avenue, Suite 1601, New York, NY 10174.

Just One Percent of Parents See Their Teens At Risk to Ecstasy; Half Don't Know About Effects of the So-Called "Love Drug"

While nearly 3 million teenagers in America have already tried the club drug Ecstasy, only one percent of parents believe their son or daughter is among them - and half of all parents are unclear about the effects of the so-called "love drug," according to a national survey released by the Partnership for Drug-Free America. Thanks largely to the media, parents are now aware of Ecstasy," said Stephen J. Pasierb, president & CEO of the Partnership. "The job at hand is turning awareness into knowledge and action. If one out of every two parents does not know how Ecstasy affects users, millions of parents could be missing potentially life-saving warning signs." The 2001-2002 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) surveyed 1,219 parents across the country from December 2001 to January 2002. The findings include the following:

- **Spreading the word:** 92 % of all parents have heard about Ecstasy. Parents of children in grades 7 to 12 are more likely to have heard about Ecstasy (93 %) than parents of younger children in grades 4 to 6 (89 %).
- **Instilling the meaning:** One of every two parents in America (49 %) is unclear about Ecstasy's effects on users. Some 60 % of all parents are unsure of what's in the drug.
- **Not acknowledging the risk to their children:** With 12 % of teenagers in the country (2.8 million teens) reporting use of Ecstasy, the study released today shows that only one percent of parents believe their teen might have tried the drug. (Teen use of Ecstasy has jumped 71 % since 1999 - and is now equal to or greater than adolescent consumption of cocaine, crack, heroin, LSD and methamphetamine.)
- **Parent & teen perceptions far apart:** Parents underestimate the availability of Ecstasy to teenagers, and overestimate the degree of risk teens associate with the drug. Almost three out of four parents (72 %) believe their teen sees great risk in using Ecstasy once or twice. (Just 42 % of teens agree.) Some 41 percent of parents think Ecstasy would be very or fairly difficult for their teen to get. (Just 26 % of teens agree.)
- **More reminders, more talks:** Exposure to anti-drug ads correlate with frequent parent-child communication about drugs. Among parents who reported seeing or hearing an anti-drug message every day or more, 55 % talk frequently. Among parents exposed to fewer messages, 44 % talk frequently.
- **Ecstasy-specific talks:** Among the drugs parents talk "a lot" about with teenagers, parents were more likely to discuss inhalants (36 %), cocaine/crack (48 %); marijuana (60 %) and alcohol (70 %) than Ecstasy (29 %).

Ecstasy -- chemically known as 3,4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA -- is a synthetic, psychoactive drug with amphetamine-like and hallucinogenic properties. Taken orally in pill form, it can be extremely dangerous, especially in high doses. Ecstasy accelerates the release of serotonin in the brain, producing an intense high, often characterized by extreme feelings of love and acceptance - "the very emotions teens crave the most," Pasierb said. Ecstasy can cause dramatic increases in body temperature and can lead to muscle breakdown, as well as kidney and cardiovascular system failure, as reported in some fatalities. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Ecstasy is a neurotoxin—it can damage the neurons that use the chemical serotonin to communicate with other neurons.

The Partnership has created a new brochure about the dangers of Ecstasy, available in both English and Spanish, which is available on the Website or by calling the toll-free number, 1-866-XTC-FACTS, managed by the National Clearinghouse on Alcohol & Drug Information.

Here in Chester County, a county-wide survey of youth was conducted in the fall of 2001. 16,574 Chester County youth completed the survey, which collected data on students' self-reported use of club drugs - with Ecstasy ranking among the most popular of the club drugs. In comparing Chester County results with Pennsylvania statewide data, it was found that overall **Chester County youth reported a slightly higher rate of club drug use for both lifetime and past 30-day use**. The most significant finding was that Chester County 12th grade students' lifetime use of club drugs, was 14.7%, compared to statewide 12th grade student use, 11.3%.

	Chester County				PA Statewide			
Grade Level	6th	8th	10th	12th	6th	8th	10th	12th
Club Drugs (lifetime use)	0.5	2.2	7.2	14.7	0.4	2.5	6.9	11.3
Club Drugs (past 30 day use)	0.3	0.9	2.6	4.9	0.2	1.0	2.5	4.0

For a copy of the complete Chester County Youth Survey Report, please contact the CCDDAS @ (610) 344-6620 or 1-800-692-1100, ext. 6620.

Bits and Pieces

POST PROM MINI GRANTS AVAILABLE

CCDDAS is pleased to announce the availability of alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) prevention mini grants specific to post prom parties. Post prom parties are defined as social activities for high school youth that exclude the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Maximum award amounts will not exceed \$500.00 and must be expended by June 30, 2003. Contact the Department (610) 344-6620 for applications. For assistance in planning your activities contact The Coad Group @ (610) 363-6164 or 1-800-917-1117.

The NCTC, (National Guard Northeast Counterdrug Training Center) **provides courses, materials, trainings, overnight accommodations, and meals. FREE** for persons connected to drug prevention, law enforcement and coalitions in the Northeast Region of the United States. (If they don't fill course seats they open it up the other states.) All you have to do is "get" there. NCTC is located about 20 minutes east of Harrisburg on I-81, exit 85-B. Upcoming courses, especially for tobacco coalitions, alcohol coalitions or all-drug coalitions are the new "Achieving Outcomes" course from CSAP and the "Coalition Building" course. Focus in both courses includes how to measure outcomes, create theory-driven logic models and how to evaluate programs and progress. These courses are first-come, first served and fill up fast! Register now at www.counterdrug.org.

Curriculum/Video Review

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and the U.S. Department of Education have identified a number of alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) programs as "exemplary" or model programs. Programs were selected based on their demonstrated effectiveness and potential for replication. Project Alert (Adolescent Learning Experiences in Resistance Training) developed by the Best Foundation has earned this endorsement. Project Alert targets middle school students (grades 6, 7, 8) and is taught in 14 class sessions over a two-year period. The program has been shown to dramatically reduce both the initiation of drug use and the transition to regular use by focusing on the "gateway drugs" – alcohol, marijuana and inhalants.

Project Alert can be implemented in the school or community setting, however sessions must be completed in the proper order as the skills that are taught build on one another. Individuals may be trained in the Project Alert curriculum on-line, or via traditional classroom setting, cost is \$150 per person. Cost includes training, lesson plans, interactive student videos, booster lessons, and periodic updates to the video and print materials, newsletters, as well as on-line technical assistance.

Additional information may be found on their web site; www.projectalert.best.org or by contacting the Community Prevention Department of The Coad Group @ (610) 363-6164 or 1-800-917-1117.

ANNUAL REPORT

Copies of the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Service's Annual Report for FY 2001/2002 are available to the public and may be obtained by contacting the Department @ (610) 344-6620 or 1-800-692-1100, Extension 6620.

Mark Your Calendar...



- National Guard Northeast Counterdrug Training Center upcoming Events:
January 30-31st 2003—Achieving Outcomes
March, April and June of 2003—Coalition Building
Call 717-732-7554 or visit www.counterdrug.org for more details. You can register on-line!
- The Chester County Tobacco Free Coalition meets on the second Monday of every other month. Next meetings are on **January 13, 2003** and **March 10, 2003** from 9-11 a.m. and take place in the Government Services Center. For more information contact Michele Kratchman at (610) 344-5209.
- Youth to Youth Weekend Conference: January 10,11,12, 2003. Call Sue Siensa for information (610) 347-0429
- PAUD Regional Meeting (Pennsylvania Against Underage Drinking) **December 18, 2002** at Bucks County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. For more information call: (215) 345-6644.
- SADD Conference – February 26, 2002. For more information contact Megan McNicholas at (610) 363-6164

The next issue of The Exchange will be prepared in February 2003. Suggestions for articles are due by February 15th. Email your suggestions or articles to: smith@ccis.net, or to mpolvino@chesco.org.



Marijuana: How to Tell Your Kids to Say No, Even if You Didn't

Parents. The Anti-Drug.

Picture this: you're driving your child home one afternoon and she turns to you and asks, "Mom, did you ever use marijuana when you were a kid?" Or, you're helping your child with homework and he asks, "Dad, did you smoke pot when you were in high school?"

This is a question many parents hope to avoid. Unless the answer is an unequivocal "no," it may be difficult to know what to say.

How honest should you be? Phillippe Cunningham, a family therapist at the Medical University of South Carolina, recommends an honest answer when a child asks about your past. Otherwise, you risk losing credibility with your kids. "This doesn't mean you should recount every detail of your high school or college years," says Dr. Cunningham. "But use it as an opportunity to talk with your child. Kids can learn a lot from their parents' experiences."

What if your child thinks that since you admitted to using marijuana and you've grown up just fine it is okay for her to use marijuana, too? The fact is, we all want what's best for our children. Today's marijuana is not the ditchweed of the 1960s. Marijuana is more potent than it was a generation ago and more kids are using it at a younger age, when their bodies and minds are developing. We also know much more about the real risks of marijuana use, thanks to new research. Parents can also draw on real-life examples of friends who had trouble as a result of marijuana use, such as a friend who used marijuana for years and lost interest in school, a fellow student who failed to get a scholarship, or the neighbor who caused a car crash while high.

What if you are afraid of sounding like a hypocrite? "Do as I say, not as I do" has never been a good method of parenting. Parents can emphasize that this discussion is about your child's future, and not about your past. Even if you made mistakes in the past, be clear you do not want your child to repeat them. Most importantly, remember that when your child asks you about your past, he or she has just opened the door for an ongoing dialogue about drugs. Use this opportunity to talk to them about making good choices. Studies show that parents are the single most powerful influence on their children's decisions about drug use. Research affirms that parents who are involved and talk to their kids about drugs are more likely to keep their kids away from drugs.

If you would like more tips on communication and parenting, visit www.theantidrug.com, a Web site designed to help parents help kids stay safe and drug-free. The site offers specific information about marijuana and other drugs and a brochure called "*Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free: A How-to Guide for Parents and Caregivers*," which may also be ordered by phone at 1-800-788-2800.

This article was adapted from an article posted at theantidrug.com website.

WAY TO GO...

Congratulations to West Chester Communities That Care for being awarded the **Linking Two Strategies 2002: Communities That Care & America's Promise** grant. This grant will supplement their prevention efforts by enhancing opportunities for youth and families through parent education, youth community service and action, and community awareness about the benefits of offering opportunities, skills and recognition for the healthy development of our youth. Please contact Kathryn Spurlock, Community Mobilizer for additional information: (610) 363-6164.

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Exton, PA 19341

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PA 19380-0990.

For more information or to be on the mailing list for this
newsletter, contact the Community Prevention staff at:
The Coad Group, 930 East Lancaster Avenue
Exton, PA 19341.

610.363.6164 or 1.800.917.1117

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The Coad Group's website is now live at
www.coadgroup.com

Please visit the site for:

- ✓ Information about agency programs: Community Prevention, Communities That Care (CTC), Student Assistance Program (SAP), Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC), Alcohol Safe Driving, Training Institute, Mental Health Services and Highway Safety
- ✓ Directions to the facility
- ✓ Links to other great sites

For More Information, Check Out These Resources



Join Together (617) 437-1500
www.jointogether.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.nida.nih.gov or
clubdrugs.org

**National Center for Chronic Disease
Prevention and Health**
www.cdc.gov/tobacco

**National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug
Information**
1-800-729-6686
www.health.org

Partnership for a Drug-Free America
(212) 922-1560
www.drugfreeamerica.org

**PA Dept. of Health, Research & Info. Clearing-
house**
www.padohric.org

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters.
(800) 344-2666 or (800) 356-9996.
www.al-anon.alateen.org