Pennsylvania
Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs

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DDAP Physician Recommendations for Addressing Key SUD Issues in PA

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Key Issues

- SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) DATA TRENDS
- SCREENING, NALOXONE ACCESS, AND SUPPORT
- MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID USE DISORDERS (MOUD)
- STIGMA REDUCTION
- RESOURCES

DDAP KEY PRIORITIES

Understanding SUD Data Trends

- Fatal overdoses are declining
  - **30% decrease** since Governor Josh Shapiro took office
  - Over **17,600 overdose reversals** using naloxone supplied by DDAP statewide
- Shifting drug supply
- Top substances for treatment admissions
  - **Alcohol, opioids**, and **stimulants**
  - Based on DDAP fiscal year 2025-26 data*
    - **4,300 admissions tracked**
    - **42%** were for **alcohol** as the primary substance **= more than 1800**
    - **12%** were for **heroin**
    - **12%** were for **methamphetamine** (stimulants)

*Data does not include Medicaid data

DDAP KEY PRIORITIES

Screening, Naloxone Access, and Support

- Screenings at every encounter
- Co-prescribe naloxone
- Train staff on naloxone and referral pathways
- Form warm handoff relationships with county drug and alcohol offices
  - Since Governor Shapiro took office, warm handoff programs have been operating in nearly **170 Pennsylvania hospitals**
  - Warm handoff programs have helped nearly **68,000 Pennsylvanians** get into treatment
- Treatment referrals for at-risk patients: **Get Help Now** helpline and **Treatment Atlas** locator

DDAP KEY PRIORITIES

Expanding Access to MOUD

- Initiate MOUD when indicated
- Use telehealth
  - Currently have **14 telehealth-only providers** operating in Pennsylvania.
- Coordinate with mobile medication units
  - **Gaudenzia, Merakey**, and **Tadiso** are Pennsylvania treatment providers with mobile units
  - Four units in all
  - More information about the mobile units
- Coordinate with opioid treatment providers
- Decide with patient which MOUD is best for them; use clinical decision-making tool
- Train staff on MOUD

DDAP KEY PRIORITIES

Stigma Reduction and Person-Centered Communications

- Use non-stigmatizing, person-first language in physical settings and documentation
- Embed trauma-informed and recovery-oriented principles
- Lead by example
- Train staff on stigma reduction: **LifeUnitesUs.com**
  - Launched in Pennsylvania in 2020
  - Components of the campaign include free resources for SUD professionals that are research-based and SUD-related webinars
  - Survey results show it's working. Those who saw the campaign report it:
    - **Increased their awareness of opioid use disorder stigma**
    - **Helped them feel prepared to talk with others about opioid use disorder (OUD) stigma**
    - **Increased their willingness to obtain and provide naloxone**
    - **Helped to change attitudes about using medications to effectively treat OUD**

DDAP KEY PRIORITIES

Resources

Get Help Now

Connect patients and their families to treatment, support services, and local resources.

Treatment Atlas

Help patients find and compare treatment facilities that meet their needs.

Overdose Prevention

Help patients access free, life-saving naloxone and fentanyl and xylazine test strips.

Warm Handoff

Connect patients to substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports following hospital care.

Thank you

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