



NEWS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, CHAIR
KENNETH E. LAWRENCE, JR., VICE CHAIR
JOSEPH C. GALE, COMMISSIONER

Contact:

Lorie Slass, Communications Director 610-278-3061 lslass@montcopa.org
Kaitlyn Foti, Press Secretary 610-278-3062 kfoti@montcopa.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 20, 2017



Montgomery County Releases 2016 Naloxone Data Commissioner Arkoosh Provides Update on Overdose Task Force Activities

Norristown, PA (April 20, 2017) – Montgomery County EMS administered 847 does of naloxone in 2016 according to a presentation at today’s Montgomery County Board of Commissioners meeting, including 621 reversals or saves. Naloxone (also known as Narcan) is the life-saving overdose reversal drug. The Coroner’s office also reported drug–related deaths from 2015-2016 increased by more than 40 percent.

“Montgomery County is not immune to the growing national problem of opioid addiction,” said Commissioner Valerie Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “Police and EMS on the front lines are doing their best to save lives, but far too many people are not surviving this epidemic. Tackling this challenge involves understanding substance use disorder as a chronic disease that requires prevention, intervention and treatment.”

David Brown, Deputy Director-EMS Division of the County’s Department of Public Safety reported data on the administration of Naloxone and noted a 39 percent increase in EMS administrations from 2015. He also highlighted the fact that all police departments in Montgomery County are carrying or in-training to carry naloxone.

In September 2014, the Montgomery County Overdose Task Force was established by then Commissioner Chair Josh Shapiro to address the issue of increased opioid deaths and provide recommendations on how the county could help combat the epidemic. Today, the Task Force is led by Chair Arkoosh, District Attorney Kevin Steele, and Abington Commissioner Lori Schreiber and is comprised of substance abuse and medical professionals, educators, law enforcement, and concerned citizens. The Task Force also brings together a working group of more than 10 county departments to provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach to fighting the opioid epidemic.

The Task Force set out a specific priority to ensure that Naloxone is available to those on the front lines of this epidemic. As of this year, the county has successfully engaged all local police forces in carrying Naloxone to

administer to victims suffering from an overdose. Outreach efforts are now focusing on school districts and universities.

“Naloxone is important because it saves lives – those suffering from the disease of addiction can’t get the help they need if they are dead on the streets. But we won’t be successful in combatting this epidemic if we don’t focus on prevention and treatment for those who need it,” added Arkoosh.

Among the task-force efforts being led throughout the county:

Naloxone Dissemination

- In addition to EMS and Police carrying Naloxone, through a Montgomery County standing order and a Pennsylvania Department of Health Standing Order, more than 100 pharmacies throughout the county also offer Naloxone to individuals or family members of those at-risk for overdoses.
- All county health department clinics or offices have Naloxone available.
- Eleven of 21 county school districts are participating in the state Department of Health’s Narcan program in high schools.
- The county is working with its colleges and universities to take advantage of Adapt Pharma’s free Narcan program.

Drug Take Back Day

- Keeping all unwanted or expired medicines, including opioids, out of medicine cabinets helps prevent young people from experimenting with the drugs.
- The Montgomery County Drug Take Back Day, a joint effort by the District Attorney’s Office and the Police Chiefs Association of Montgomery County, has collected and destroyed more than 29,000 pounds of medicines since 2010.
- Next Saturday, April 29, is Drug Take Back Day, a semi-annual event when people are encouraged to drop off their unwanted medications at local police stations.
- Learn more about Take Back Day and drop-off locations on the District Attorney’s website.

Drug Treatment Courts

- Led by Judge Stephen O’Neill, Montgomery County Drug Treatment Courts have helped addicts get the treatment they need by offering a court-supervised treatment program for non-violent offenders with drug and/or alcohol related charges who suffer from a drug and/or alcohol addiction.
- The program allows for addicted individuals to remain in treatment for long periods of time while under close supervision.
- There are currently 139 active participants in Montgomery County Drug Treatment Court program with more than 430 graduates - 74% of whom have not returned to the criminal justice system.

Connecting Those Suffering From Addiction to Treatment

- Each year, approximately 3,500 Montgomery County residents receive prevention, short term intervention, treatment and case management services through the Office of Drug and Alcohol's contracted qualified provider network.
- The office also assists individuals seeking recovery by providing telephone support on how to access treatment services in the County as well as to provide financial support for uninsured residents. In addition to our office, the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs has set-up a 24/7 hotline at 1-800-662-HELP, to assist individuals find and access treatment options.
- Montgomery County is working to implement warm hand-off projects in all nine general hospitals within the county. Warm hand-off projects work to help overdose survivors in hospital emergency departments get immediately connected to a treatment program.

Resources and more information about Montgomery County's efforts to fight opioid addiction can be found at www.montcopa.org/overdoseprevention. The presentation given by Deputy Director Brown can be viewed online at www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/17476.