

**BLUE CARES Next Step (BCNS)  
Overview for Law Enforcement Officers**



**Goal:**

**To assist individuals with stimulant or opioid misuse issues who are arrested to be referred to treatment as an alternative to the criminal justice system.**

Blue CARES Next Step has been developed in collaboration with the Berks County Office of the District Attorney (BCODA) and the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General. This design establishes a clear process and procedure for the identification of eligible participants which includes the timely connection of arrested individuals with the drug and alcohol treatment services. These procedures identify the responsibilities of the local law enforcement department, the BCODA, and the drug and alcohol assessment, case manager, treatment, and recovery support providers.

The local law enforcement agencies (LEA) are the gateway to the identification of eligible participants for the BCNS project. The arresting officer, upon the identification of an individual with a possible opioid and/or stimulant use will provide the individual with project information.

- If the individual accepts project services, the officer will refer the individual to the BCODA. Upon review of the referral, the BCODA will either approve or disapprove the referral within 12 hours of its receipt and notify the LEA of the status of the referral.
- If the individual refuses services charges will be filed.

**BCNS Referral Procedure:**

- The arresting officer will refer the individual to Assistant DA Justin Bodor
  - Email (jbodor@county of berks.com) or via facsimile, 610-478-6002
- Required documents:
  - Officer's incident report (please reference "Blue Cares" in email or fax coversheet)

**Required Training**

Key to the success of this project is the training of all participating partners in the project rationale, an understanding of addiction as a disease, and the process and procedure for engaging arrested individuals. COCA and the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General will be responsible for the provision of this four-hour online training. In addition, a brief orientation and overview of the program and procedures will be made available to all officers in the 6 participating police departments.