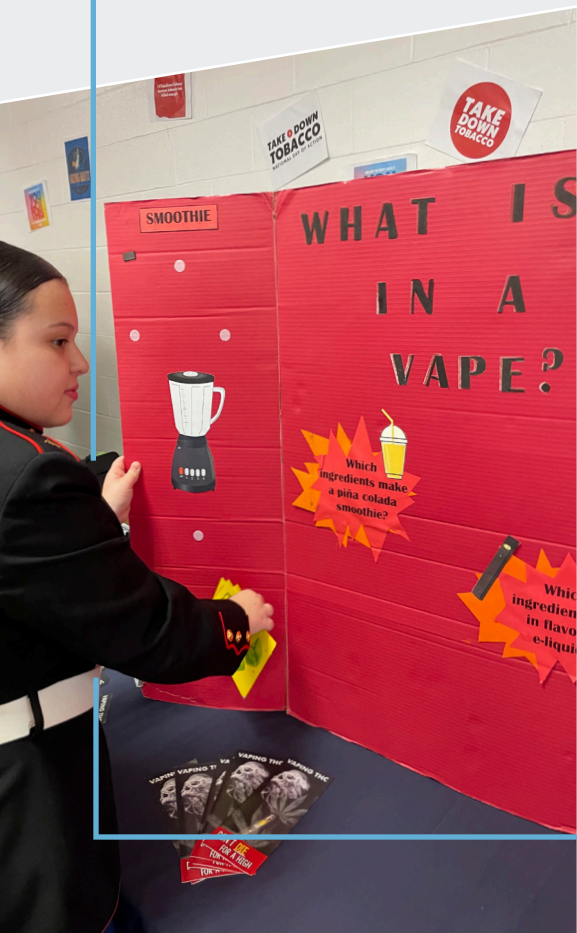




2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT





WHAT IS COCA?

Since 1971, the Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA) has served in a lead role, offering the resources necessary to respond to the complex problems of substance abuse and addiction. Designated by the County Commissioners as the Single County Authority (SCA) for Berks County, COCA is a non-profit organization responsible for the administration and management of publicly-funded alcohol, tobacco, and drug services.

MISSION

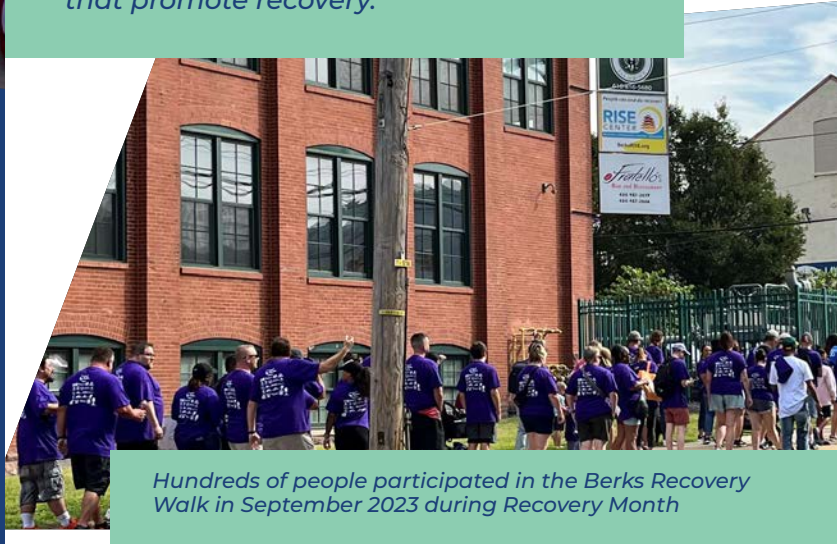
To provide leadership in the development and implementation of policies and programs related to a system of prevention and intervention services that prevent the onset of addiction, and treatment services that promote recovery.

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Top: Our Prevention Specialists discussed plans for summer programs on WEEU radio show.

Bottom: COCA Co-Sponsored a Recovery Awareness Night game at the Reading Fightin' Phils. Over 17 partners set up tables, and over 7,000 attended the game.



Hundreds of people participated in the Berks Recovery Walk in September 2023 during Recovery Month



Learn more about us at COCABerks.org

COVER PHOTOS - (l to r) Prevention Specialist Amber Moyer leads a Brain Games activity at West Reading Playground; Local officials pose with DDAP Sec. Dr. Latika Davis-Jones (center) during her visit to Berks Co. in March. Bottom (l to r): Reading High School ROTC students helped organize events for Take Down Tobacco Day; Participants in the Berks Recovery Walk stopped to view the SOS Berks recovery-themed mural.



Kathleen F. Noll

“Our mission has always been about ensuring services are provided using high quality programming”

For over 50 years the Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA), as the Single County Authority for drug and alcohol programs, has been providing drug and alcohol Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Recovery Support services to Berks County. Our mission has always been about ensuring these services are provided using high quality programming.

During fiscal year 2023/24, COCA continued to provide evidence-based Prevention programs to schools and the community, and summer programs for youth. During the past fiscal year, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs approved Teens and Technology, a protocol developed by COCA Prevention staff, as a program available statewide.

COCA has expanded Intervention efforts to include best practices in harm reduction. This includes distributing naloxone, a medication that can reverse opioid overdoses,

to first responders, community members and organizations, and instituting a naloxone redistribute program enabling organizations to offer naloxone directly to their clients. Our harm reduction efforts also include distributing fentanyl and xylazine drug checking strips and offering harm reduction trainings.

COCA continues to offer a comprehensive continuum of drug and alcohol treatment services including all FDA approved medications for opioid use disorder. We also continue to provide recovery support services including recovery housing and individual recovery support services. During FY 23-24, recovery housing beds for Women with Children were increased.

As this year’s annual report demonstrates, COCA continues to provide high quality services to the people of Berks County.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

In close conjunction with the County of Berks, COCA continues to manage the Berks County Opioid Settlement Funds (OSF). These monies are a significant benefit to the county, because they support new and innovative services, and bolster previously underfunded programs. All OSF monies must be used to abate opioid use and related disorders, and must be spent in accordance with the National Opioid Settlement agreement. What’s more, every subsidized program is reviewed by the PA Opioid Misuse and Addiction Abatement Trust.

OSF monies are crucial to enhancing much needed treatment and support services offered to Berks County residents, including but not limited to: medication assisted treatment, residential and outpatient treatment services, expanded recovery support services to pregnant and post-partum women and recovery house residents, as well as services to the community in general. Among the most significant programs supported by OSF in FY

2023/24, is a comprehensive medication assisted treatment program at Berks County Jail, which includes full medical and social service support.

Undoubtedly, the most exciting aspect of OSF is the capacity to adopt new services that were previously unable be funded.

These include a workforce development program for those in early recovery from an opioid use disorder, transportation for those lacking the ability to attend much needed treatment and support services, and specialized equine therapy for post-partum women. In addition, several programs providing family support and education have been implemented. Finally, resources are now available to help inform the English and Spanish speaking communities about various opioid/overdose issues and the local resources to address these issues.

[Learn more at cocaberks.org/opioidfunds](https://cocaberks.org/opioidfunds)

SOS BERKS OPIOID COALITION



Since 2016, COCA has helped lead the SOS Berks Opioid Coalition, which works to reduce opioid overdose deaths in Berks County. Among the projects undertaken in the 2023/24 fiscal year are:

- ‡ **The SOS Berks Mural Project** - Two recovery-themed murals were dedicated in Reading. The first (*pictured top left*), was dedicated in September on 9th & Oley Sts. It depicts the recovery journey of Jose Lugo, who credits his recovery to his family and Puerto Rican heritage. The 2nd, (*top right*) on 11th and Richmond Sts, features inspiring words from Yvonne Stroman. Both were based on stories from SOS Berks stigma reduction campaign, *Addiction Doesn't Define Me*.
- ‡ **Recovery Simulation Events** - SOS Berks hosted two Recovery Simulation events, engaging about 80 people in each. These hands-on experiences help participants better understand the challenges faced by those in early recovery.
- ‡ **The Response Magazine** - Published the *Response Magazine*, with information about innovations in local efforts to address substance use disorder in Berks County.
- ‡ **Health to Go Vending Machine** - SOS partnered with Penn State College of Medicine and the Reading YMCA to introduce a new smart vending machine that dispenses free wellness and harm reduction supplies, and connects people to social services in the community.
- ‡ **Luncheon for African American leaders** - After learning that African Americans are disproportionately impacted by overdoses in Berks County, but less likely to seek treatment, SOS Berks hosted a luncheon, engaging 20 community leaders in a conversation on how to reverse that trend.

[Visit sosberks.org to learn more](https://www.sosberks.org)

20 Berks County African American community leaders engaged in a discussion on reducing overdose deaths among the Black population

SOS engaged about 160 people in two Recovery Simulation events, including one at Easy Does It, Inc. and another at Penn State Berks.

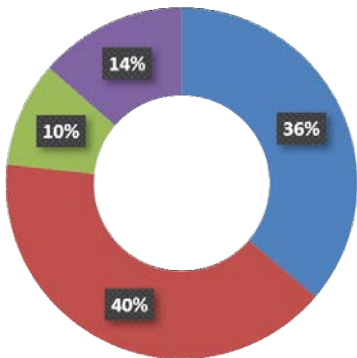


SOS Berks & Penn State College of Medicine officials cut the ribbon on the new Health to Go vending machine.



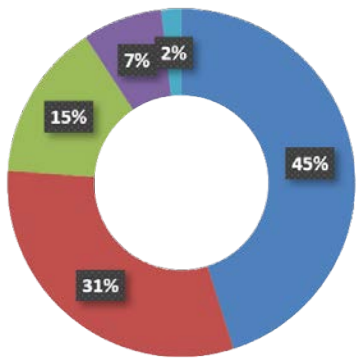
FISCAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



Revenues

● State Funds	\$4,213,512
● Federal Funds	\$4,723,577
● County Funds	\$1,129,086
● Other COCA Fees & Income	\$1,580,760
Total COCA Revenue	\$11,646,935



Expenditures

● Treatment Related Services	\$5,256,682
● Treatment	\$3,608,191
● Prevention	\$1,703,634
● Administration	\$862,910
● Intervention	\$215,519
Total COCA Expenditures	\$11,646,935

Chart excludes provider revenue, rent, client fees totaling \$1,750,540. For more information regarding our 23/24 fiscal report, please visit cocaberks.org/annualreport

*Treatment Related Services include the following: screening assessment, referral, case management, recovery support services and transitional/recovery housing.

2023/24 COCA HIGHLIGHT

In March, COCA hosted Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Secretary Dr. Latika Davis-Jones when she visited Berks County to kick off Phase 2 of the agency's statewide stakeholder engagement tour. During her visit, Dr. Davis-Jones held a roundtable discussion at COCA's Berks RISE Center on local efforts to manage the opioid crisis. More than 40 people attended. Following the 2.5-hour roundtable discussion, Secretary Davis-Jones visited two Berks County programs, including Berks Counseling Center and Easy Does It, Inc.



PREVENTION

Prevention Week Celebration

Individuals in attendance: 60

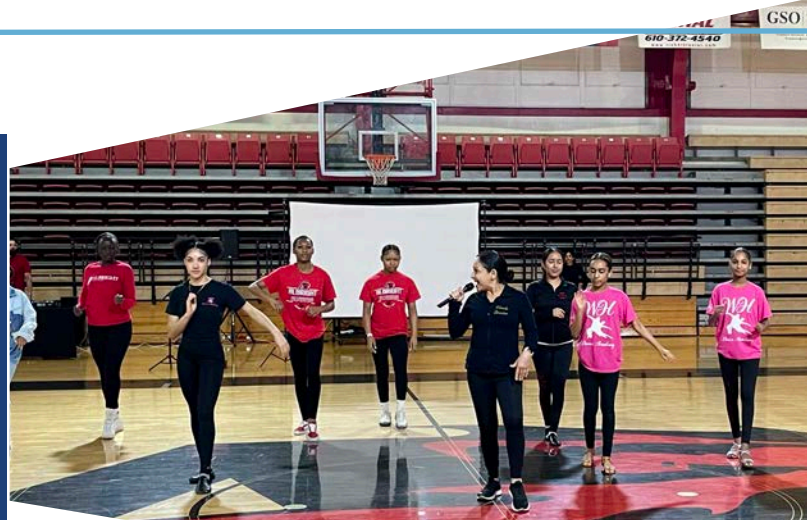
In celebration of National Prevention Week (May 12-18), our Prevention team hosted a celebration that included breakfast, an awards presentation, tours of the Prevention offices and games and prizes. Seven Berks County leaders were honored with Recognition of Excellence Awards for their contribution to prevention education in their communities. Attendees participated in prevention-themed activities that offered a glimpse into the fun and engaging methods prevention specialists use to teach youth skills to live substance-free lives.



Recognition of Excellence award winners (l to r) Mike Reese, Logan Long, Alycia Lenart, Heather Boyer, Pat Ganter Scholarship winner Katelynn Humbles, and Anita Miller. (Not pictured: First Sgt Joseph Cipko & Ericka Garcia)



COCA Prevention Staff (L to R) Leslie Houck, Sonia Santiago, Amber Moyer, Mascot Courage, Courtney Keith, Teresa Detweiler, Zoe Stankiewicz



COCA hosted a Dancing with a Purpose event in April that engaged students at Albright College in dancing instructions and a discussion on binge drinking.

Media & Communications

COCA Website Page Views	74,543
Social Media Post Impressions	262,027
<i>The Response Magazine</i> - Copies Distributed	4,000

Prevention Services

Health Fairs - People Reached	9,690
Dancing with a Purpose Participants	30
Too Good For Drugs Evidence-Based Curriculum Participants	809
Kids/Teens & Technology Elementary and Middle School Participants	1,767
Red Ribbons Distributed	40,772
Information and Promotional Material Distributed	9,690
Summer Program Participants	1,050
Medication Lock Boxes Distributed	841

*Some participants may have attended more than one event

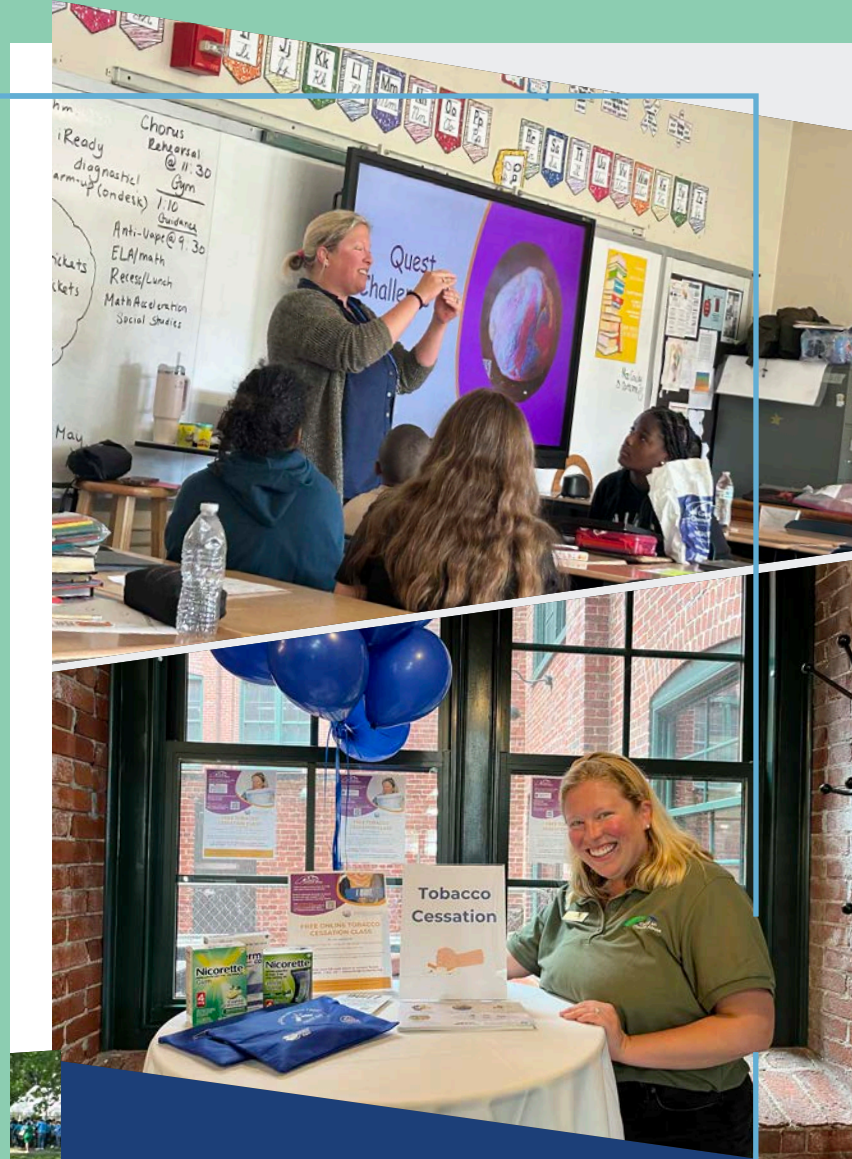
Vaping Education

Youth, Parents & College Students Reached: 2,392

Kid/Teens & Technology

Students Reached: 1,767

Our Kids/Teens & Technology programs educate students on responsible digital citizenship, teaching them how to create safe spaces online, evaluate information accuracy, and most importantly, the skills to create a balance between media time and other life activities. Students also learn how gaming is connected to gambling, and how developers use behavioral science to keep people gaming, as well as the warning signs of a technology addiction. In January 2024, PA's Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs listed Kids/Teens & Technology as an approved program for other SCAs to receive funding to facilitate. We are proud that our technology programs are now being delivered across the state.



Tobacco Cessation Classes

People Reached: 741*

COCA's tobacco cessation classes give Berks County residents the resources and support they need to quit nicotine products. Taught by Tobacco Treatment Specialist Teresa Detweiler, classes are cost-free and judgment-free. Participants meet in hour-long weekly sessions over 7-8 weeks, either in person or virtually, and receive free nicotine replacement products, as well as advice for fighting cravings. In addition, Teresa follows up with phone calls, providing participants with encouragement, and offering words of support as they work towards their goal of being nicotine-free.

Learn more at cocaberks.org/betobaccofree

*Top Photo: Tobacco Treatment Specialist Teresa Detweiler presents a vaping lesson
Bottom: Teresa Detweiler promotes cessation classes at the Prevention Celebration.*

**Some participants may have attended more than one class.*



Our Prevention Specialists Amber Moyer and Zoe Stankiewicz (center) took YLC members Grace Persky (far left) and Katelynn Humbles (far right) to advocate for tobacco legislation during Day at the Capitol in May.

Youth Leadership Council

People Reached: 113

Last September, COCA launched the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) in order to offer Berks County high school youth the opportunity to represent their peers as the youth voice for prevention. In FY 2023-24, YLC members participated in various projects and events including a Halloween Trunk or Treat, Day at the Capitol, and a clothing drive. YLC member Katelynn Humbles (pictured above, far right) was also awarded the \$5,000 Pat Ganter Scholarship for 2024 in May.

INTERVENTION, TREATMENT & TREATMENT RELATED SERVICES

Intervention Services & Programs

Fentanyl & Xylazine Test Strips Distributed	14,247
NARCAN® Kits Distributed	7,841
Berks County Hotline Calls	196
SAP Assessments	1,012
Medication Assistance Jail Program Treatment Admissions	363
Warm Handoff Interventions	824
Marijuana Diversion Program Completions	202
Urine Specimens Tested	25,095

Stigma & Harm Reduction

Drug checking strips distributed: 14,247

COCA continues to implement innovative approaches to expand harm reduction and reduce stigma. In FY 2023/24, Penn State College of Medicine introduced the new Health to Go smart vending machine, in collaboration with SOS Berks and the Reading Berks YMCA. The machine dispenses free harm reduction items, including NARCAN® and drug checking strips, alongside other wellness supplies such as hygiene kits and menstrual supplies. The machine's touch screen front enables people to find community services or learn more about the items they select. In addition, COCA produced short videos in English and Spanish that instruct people on how to use fentanyl and xylazine checking strips. These videos can be viewed on the vending machine. By making harm reduction supplies available in a public space along with other wellness items, we increased their accessibility, while simultaneously presenting them to the general public in a non-stigmatizing manner.



Opioid overdose reversal kits

We continuously work to increase awareness, provide access to and decrease stigma surrounding NARCAN®

NARCAN® Expiration Campaign

In July, we launched a multimedia campaign that reminded people to check the expiration dates on NARCAN®. This bilingual campaign included digital ads on Facebook and Instagram, as well as print ads and radio spots in English and Spanish. In addition, the ads appeared on Reading BARTA buses to ensure maximum exposure. All ads directed Berks County residents to our website to order a free box of NARCAN® as a replacement, or a NARCAN® kit for those who did not previously own one.





We produced short videos in English and Spanish that taught people how to use drug checking strips to check street drugs for fentanyl and xylazine.

NARCAN® Distribution

Narcan kits distributed: 7,841

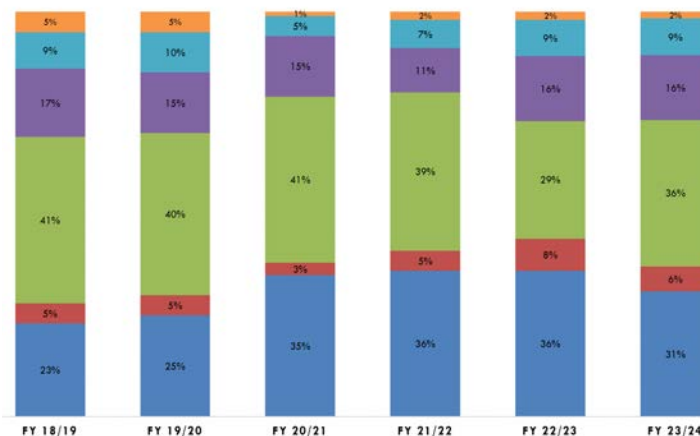
At the Council on Chemical Abuse, we know that naloxone is integral to preventing overdose deaths and saving lives. We are committed to getting free naloxone medication into as many hands as possible in Berks County. NARCAN® is a brand name of naloxone formulated in a nasal spray to offer quick and easy administration, reversing the effects of an opioid overdose in minutes.

COCA distributed a total of 7,850 NARCAN® kits in FY 2023/24, more than doubling the 2,703 total from the previous fiscal year.

This increase is the result of several factors, including greater awareness and reduced stigma among the general public. In addition, COCA implemented a media campaign focused on the availability of NARCAN®. (See article on left) We could not have been as successful with NARCAN® distribution without making connections and collaborating with partners in the community. We have providers, agencies, and outreach organizations that redistribute NARCAN® to their clients, patients, members, and the community at large. We also have businesses, offices, schools, and churches requesting NARCAN® for their staff and congregations. In addition, law enforcement, emergency response personnel, search and rescue, and canine teams stay prepared by having NARCAN® kits on hand.

In addition to providing free NARCAN®, COCA also offers free training, presentations, and support to any person, group, or business seeking resources. We continuously work to increase awareness, provide access, and decrease stigma surrounding NARCAN®, and to educate people on its effectiveness as a lifesaving tool that should be in every first aid kit and AED box.

Primary Drug for People Admitted for Treatment Through COCA Funding



- Alcohol
- Cocaine
- Heroin & Other Opioids
- Marijuana
- Stimulants
- Other

637 Individuals

Received Pre-Treatment Services at Berks County Jail

Treatment Services

Individuals Funded for Treatment: 1,269

In the course of treatment, an individual may require admission to several levels of care (i.e. detoxification followed by residential treatment). A total of 1,269 individuals were funded for 1,459 treatment episodes in fiscal year 2023/24, 312 episodes were for residential levels of care (i.e. withdrawal management, residential treatment and halfway house) and 1,147 episodes were for outpatient levels of care (i.e. intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization and medication-assisted treatment).

Treatment Access

Requests to COCA: 2,338

When an individual requests access to treatment, screening/assessment is completed to determine the person's need for substance use disorder treatment and their eligibility for COCA treatment funding. Berks County residents with a substance use disorder and no public or private insurance benefits are eligible for COCA treatment funding.

RISE RECOVERY CENTER

The RISE Center opened in 2019 as a place to provide resources, support, activities and meeting space for people in recovery and their families. Over the past few years, under the direction of COCA Community Programs Specialist Yvonne Stroman, the number of activities occurring at the RISE Center have greatly increased. In FY 2023/24, a variety of recovery groups held meetings at RISE. COCA also hosted 7 DDAP professional trainings there, attended by 185 people. And, perhaps most significantly, activities such as Taco Tuesdays, football watch parties, movie nights and Sundaes on Fridays, helped support people in recovery by providing them with opportunities to meet, socialize and have fun.

Learn more at BerksRISE.org



Top: Members of the Spring CRS Training cohort celebrate their completion of the 10-week program outside the RISE Center. Bottom: Professionals receive a PA Dept. of Drug & Alcohol Programs Addictions 101 Training at the RISE Center.

RECOVERY

Individuals who received Recovery Housing Services	218
Individuals who received Case Management Services	1,700
Individuals who received Treatment Follow-Up Contacts	1,380
Individuals who attended Recovery Support Services	74
Bed days provided to individuals in Recovery Housing	29,855

SOR Housing Program

Individuals/Families who Received Services: 57

The State Opioid Response (SOR) Rental Assistance Program was able to provide rental assistance, utility assistance, as well as furnishings from the Rudden Family Foundation, to 57 individuals and families in fiscal year 2023/24. All individuals worked with a case manager and completed a housing service plan and household budget. Clients were also linked with community resources, such as food and diaper banks, utility assistance programs, free/low-cost internet, and employment programs.

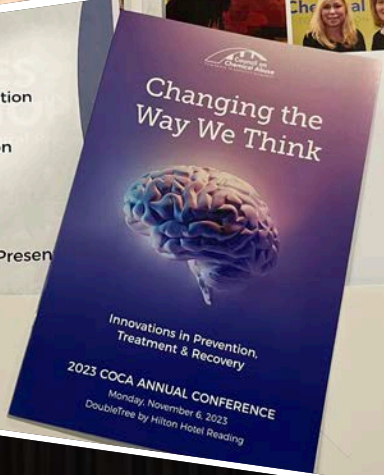
Certified Recovery Specialist Training

Participants: 48

COCA offered three Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) training cohorts in FY 2023/24, which were completed by 48 participants. The cohorts consist of 10 sessions held on Saturdays at the RISE Center. Once completed, participants must pass a PA Certification Board exam to earn the CRS credential, which qualifies individuals in recovery to help others move into and through the recovery process. The cohorts are usually filled to capacity and often have a waiting list. The CRS trainings offer a career path for people in recovery that enables them to serve as a role model, mentor and advocate for those in early recovery, and to provide a service that substantially improves an individual's ability to sustain recovery.



8:15-8:30 AM	Welcome
9:30-9:20 AM	Keynote Presentation
9:30-10:30 AM	Panel Presentation
10:45-12 PM	Workshop A
12:00-1:15 PM	Lunch & Awards Present



Top: Dr. David Loveland delivers the keynote address
 Center: 2023 Conference information packets
 Bottom: Winners of the 2023 COCA Conference Awards (L to R) Lydia Singley, Theresa LaScala, Sgt. Todd Harris, COCA Executive Director Kathleen Noll, Robert Diaz, Drexel University Medical Students Tom Parker, Winston Marquis & Carter Van; and Dr. Ramona Palmerio-Roberts.

2023 Annual Conference

In November, COCA held the 2023 Annual Conference with nearly 200 professionals in attendance at the DoubleTree Hotel in Reading. The conference focused on the theme of Changing the Way We Think, and featured workshops on harm reduction, drug trends, and medication assisted treatment. In addition, a panel of experts provided a discussion on innovative ideas.

Berks County Commissioners

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 Michael S. Rivera, Vice Chair
 Dante Santoni, Jr.

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 Kevin Rudy
 Dr. Kristen Sandel
 Richelle Smith
 Thomas Xavios

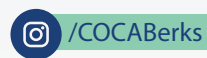
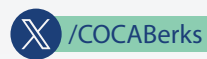
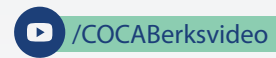
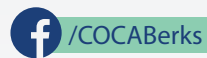
Staff Members

Kathleen F. Noll, Executive Director
 Deborah Baer, Billing Technician
 Laura Catalano, Communications Coordinator
 Yomary Castro, Chief Fiscal Officer
 Susan Cawley, Fiscal Technician
 Nicole Charlanza, Harm Reduction Coordinator
 Teresa Tieman Detweiler, Prevention Specialist
 Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, Director of Planning & Resource Development
 Bernice K. Hines Corbit, Case Management Supervisor
 Leslie Houck, Prevention Specialist
 Courtney Keith, Prevention Specialist
 Alicia Kline, Prevention Program Supervisor
 Francheska Lantigua, Case Management Specialist
 Sara Liu, Fiscal Technician
 Minna Lopez, Administrative Support Specialist
 Amber Moyer, Prevention Specialist
 Paul Russell, IT Administrator
 Sonia Santiago, Prevention Specialist
 Nickie Seshan, Office Manager
 Zoe Stankiewicz, Prevention Specialist
 Jaelyn Steed, Assistant Administrator
 Yvonne Stroman, Community Programs Specialist
 Anastasia Tomko, Digital Media Specialist

All positions as of June 30, 2023

Connect with #COCABerks!

Get up-to-date news, statistics, videos,
information on upcoming events,
addiction resources and more.



Tune into our monthly WEEU & BCTV
shows for updates on prevention,
treatment & recovery in Berks County.