



2024-2025 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.



The annual Berks Recovery Walk has been a Recovery Month tradition for over 20 years. In 2024 the walk ended at the RISE Center for a recovery celebration.

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Top: COCA Community Programs Specialist Yvonne Stroman discussed racial trauma and substance use disorder with Ramona Roberts, Greg Day and Shanno Tissera from Caron Treatment Services on WEEU. Bottom: Participants of the Certified Recovery Specialist training pose outside the RISE Center after completing the training program.



Learn more about us at COCABerks.org

COVER PHOTOS - Top (l to r) COCA's Harm Reduction Coordinator Nicole Charlanza offered NARCAN information at a Reading Hospital event; Berks Recovery Walk participants pose before the walk. Bottom (l to r); Prevention Specialist Sonia Santiago leads students in a summer lesson on vaping; Berks County Commissioner Michael Rivera (far left) was among those who threw a first pitch on Recovery Awareness Night at the R-Phils.



Kathleen F. Noll

COCA HAS AN EXPANSIVE REACH IN BERKS COUNTY

A quick glance through this Annual Report demonstrates that COCA has an expansive reach when it comes to providing Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Recovery Support services in Berks County. During fiscal year 2024/25, our Prevention Team was recognized as the Showcase Winner of the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs' Impact Award for the work they do bringing prevention programs to schools and the community. They reached over 1,800 students with the 10-week evidence-based Too Good For Drugs program, taught vaping facts to over 2,000 students from elementary through college age and delivered 1,000 Quit Kits to schools and businesses across the county. They reached thousands more people through health fairs, multimedia campaigns and other school and community programs. COCA continues to lead the SOS Berks Opioid Coalition in efforts to

reduce overdoses. In FY 2024/25, the Health to Go Vending Machine at the Reading YMCA—a collaboration between SOS Berks and Penn State College of Medicine—dispensed over 5,500 free wellness and harm reduction items.

In addition, COCA distributed over 5,000 NARCAN kits and launched a NARCAN Saves Lives multimedia campaign that included billboards, bus ads and digital ads aimed at raising awareness around NARCAN. Finally, COCA continues to offer a comprehensive continuum of drug and alcohol treatment services and provide recovery support services. Through Opioid Settlement Funds, we've been able to fund even more programs, including medication assisted treatment at the Berks County Jail.

I encourage you to read through this report to gain a greater understanding of the work we do and the number of people we have reached over the past fiscal year.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

The Berks Opioid Settlement funds are in place to address detrimental effects of the opioid/ overdose crisis in Berks County and to help protect the community from such negative effects in the future. These funds are used to provide prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services related to Opioid Use Disorders (OUD) for all residents in Berks County with respect, dignity and equity while supporting culturally appropriate services and programs.

Below is a sampling of some the numerous services and programs supported by Berks Opioid Settlement Funds in FY 2024/25.

- **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) at the Berks County Jail** - Amount spent: \$711,288. The Berks County Jail System provides MAT to inmates with opioid use disorder.

- **Treatment Court Recovery House Management** Amount spent: \$318,908. This program serves men and women needing residential support for recovery from substance use disorders.
- **Recovery Works** - Amount spent: \$150,000. A workforce development program that helps those in recovery from opioid use disorders to become reliable and successful employees.
- **Residential Treatment** - Amount spent: \$238,638 To pay for individuals in need of withdrawal management and/or residential treatment services at licensed facilities.
- **Walk it Out Recovery Services** - Amount spent: \$15,807 - Funding supports Creating Lasting Family Connections, an evidence-based substance use prevention program for parents and families.

See cocaberks.org/opioidfunds for complete list

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 2024/25 fiscal year are:

- ↕ **Recovery Awareness Night** - SOS Berks Co-sponsored Recovery Awareness Night at the Reading Fightin' Phils along with Berks Counseling Center in August 2024. The event involved 16 recovery organizations who set up tables with information, helped distribute 5,000 free tickets to the game, and donated to provide over 600 free t-shirts (*photo top right*). More than 7,000 people attended.
- ↕ **Overdose Awareness Day Flag-Raising** - In August 2024, SOS Berks partnered with the City of Reading to hold a flag-raising ceremony in recognition of International Overdose Awareness Day. The ceremony featured speeches from state, county and local officials. The flag flew for 7 days at City Park in Reading.
- ↕ **The Response Magazine** - The SOS Berks Editorial Board published two issues of The Response in 2024/25. Articles appeared in English and Spanish, and focused on

technology, gambling and the value of community collaborations.

- ↕ **Luncheon for African American leaders** - The SOS Berks Treatment Committee hosted its 2nd Annual Luncheon for African American community leaders, engaging them in a conversation on how to reverse inequities in treatment among the Black population. While African Americans are disproportionately impacted by overdoses, they are less likely to seek treatment.
- ↕ **SOS Data Committee** - The Data Committee provides timely, relevant data to help support the objectives of the coalition. This includes tracking 911 overdose calls to guide NARCAN distribution, highlighting racial and ethnic disparities to reduce overdose deaths among minority populations, and supplying data for the Response magazine articles.

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

A presenter discusses inequities in treatment at a luncheon for African American community leaders in Berks County.

SOS Berks partnered with the City of Reading to hold a flag-raising ceremony in recognition of Overdose Awareness Day.



The SOS Berks Outreach & Education Committee developed a handout for seniors with medication safety tips.

FISCAL REPORT

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

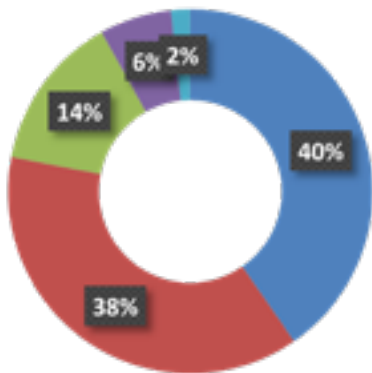
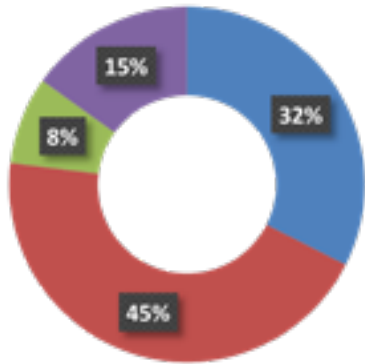


Chart excludes provider revenue, rent, client fees totaling \$1,483,123. For more information regarding our 24/25 fiscal report, please visit cocaberks.org/annualreport

Revenues

● State Funds	\$4,271,571
● Federal Funds	\$5,853,210
● County Funds	\$1,051,042
● Other COCA Fees & Income	\$1,986,199
Total COCA Revenue	\$13,162,021

Expenditures

● Treatment Related Services	\$5,313,462
● Treatment	\$4,957,833
● Prevention	\$1,826,137
● Administration	\$839,146
● Intervention	\$225,443
Total COCA Expenditures	\$13,162,021

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

2024/25 COCA HIGHLIGHT

In February, COCA's Prevention Team was named the Showcase Winner of the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs' Impact Award, which "highlights substance use and problem gambling prevention teams, projects and accomplishments that have made a meaningful impact in their communities." COCA's Prevention Department was recognized as a "dynamic and innovative direct service team. Despite their small size they've delivered prevention services to over 2,000 youth in fall 2024 alone."



COCA Prevention Specialists handed out Courage Kits with fun prevention messaging to youth in summer programs.



COCA Prevention Specialists (l to r) Amber Moyer, Sonia Santiago, Leslie Houck, Courtney Kieth, Teresa Detweiler & Zoe Stankiewicz



COCA Prevention Specialists Sonia Santiago and Teresa Detweiler celebrate after being recognized by DDAP as Showcase Winners.

PREVENTION

Prevention Week Awards

The Council on Chemical Abuse prevention team celebrated National Prevention Week in May 2025 by recognizing Berks County professionals who are champions of substance use prevention in area schools and the community. Rather than invite award winners to a ceremony, COCA's prevention staff went on "tour," surprising recipients by delivering awards to eight different Berks County sites. The awards provided a fun and unique way to recognize those in our community who are making a difference through prevention programming.



Award winner Justin Underkoffler, School Counselor at 13th & Union Elementary School, poses with COCA mascot Courage and members of the COCA Prevention Team.



Members of the Youth Volunteer Corps cheer as Program Coordinator Casey Trexler is surprised by COCA's Excellence in Prevention Award.



Our Prevention Specialists team up every year with Reading High School JROTC students to provide school-wide Take Down Tobacco Day activities. The students also bring anti-vaping lessons to elementary students.

Media & Communications

Social Media Posts **2,086**

Social Media Post Impressions **306,545**

The Response magazine - copies distributed to community **3,899**

Prevention Services

Health Fairs People Reached **7,487**

Vape Never Mini-Campaign Reach/Impressions **193,374**

Too Good For Drugs Evidence-Based Curriculum Participants **1,885**

Teens & Technology School Education 2-Session Participants **704**

Prevention in Pajamas Promotion Video Impressions **341,382**

Marijuana Campaign Reach/Impressions **426,888**

Summer Program Participants **1,407**

Medication Lock Boxes Distributed **410**

Vaping Education

Youth & Parents Reached: 2,272

Elementary through high school Escape the Vape programs educate students on the dangers of vaping, deceptive advertising, and critical life skills to help avoid substance use.

Kid/Teens & Technology

Students Reached: 1,079

Our Kids/Teens & Technology initiative empowers students to become responsible digital citizens. Through engaging and age-appropriate content, participants learn to create safe online environments, evaluate digital information, recognize the warning signs of technology addiction and develop healthy habits for balancing screen time with other activities. They also explore the connection between gaming and gambling, learning how developers use behavioral science to encourage prolonged play. Since receiving approval as a certified prevention program by PA's Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, our Technology curriculum has expanded to over 40 counties statewide.



COCA's Kids/Teens & Technology programs are approved by DDAP for use by prevention providers across the state. The programs are updated yearly to incorporate new information.

Too Good For Drugs

Students Reached: 1,885

Over the past three years, we've steadily increased student participation in the evidence-based Too Good for Drugs program, which builds skills for healthy decision-making, communication, and resisting peer pressure. In FY 24/25, we facilitated lessons for 2nd graders in eight schools, 4th graders in three schools, and expanded to 3rd and 5th graders in six schools. Looking ahead, COCA plans to extend 4th grade programming to five additional elementary schools in 2025/26.

No Nicotine November

People Reached: 1,000

In November 2024, COCA hosted the 3rd Annual No Nicotine November Traveling Quit Kit Tour, delivering 1,000 Quit Kits to over 20 sites in Berks County including schools, colleges, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Each kit was filled with items to help people quit smoking or vaping, including hard candy, gum, lollipops, fidget toys, tips for quitting and information about COCA's tobacco cessation classes. This marked the third year COCA hosted the tour in recognition of the Great American Smokeout in November. In 2024, the tour was expanded to include more businesses, schools and organizations.

Learn more at cocaberks.org/quitkittour

Top Photo: Tobacco Treatment Specialist Teresa Detweiler hands out a kit at Alvernia University.

Bottom: Representatives of Wyomissing Area High School accept kits to hand out to students and employees.

INTERVENTION, TREATMENT & TREATMENT RELATED SERVICES

Intervention Services & Programs

Health to Go Vending Machine Items Dispensed	5,583
NARCAN® Kits Distributed	5,780
Berks County Hotline Calls	197
SAP Assessments	829
Medication Assistance Jail Program Treatment Admissions	344
Warm Handoff Interventions	757
Marijuana Diversion Program Completions	225
Fentanyl & Xylazine Test Strips Distributed	7,350

Problem Gambling

BARTA Bus Ad Impressions: 484,000

As a nationally recognized addiction disorder, gambling-related problems impact hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians. Through funding from the PA Dept of Drug and Alcohol Programs, COCA continued to expand the reach of its problem gambling resources. In FY 24-25 COCA:

- Provided statewide professional training for the Kids/Teens and Technology program to counties across PA, and offered the program to over 40 Berks County classrooms.
- Promoted the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline through print ads, bus ads and social media.
- Facilitated gambling disorder treatment referrals to Caron Counseling Center.
- Offered Gamblers Anonymous meetings at the RISE Center.



NARCAN Saves Lives Campaign

The campaign ran for 6 weeks and incorporated bold, simple messaging to raise awareness about NARCAN®

NARCAN® Saves Lives Campaign

Campaign Reach/impressions: 3,684,767

COCA was awarded funds from the Office of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities to run an 8-week multimedia campaign in May and June aimed at Narcan awareness and distribution. Our goal was to increase the amount of Narcan kits distributed throughout Berks County, emphasize the importance of carrying Narcan, and increase awareness of COCA being a source of free Narcan in the county. The campaign incorporated bold, simple messaging, "NARCAN Saves Lives," in white lettering on a black background that appeared on 5 billboards, 2 bus shelters and 4 buses, as well as social media and digital advertising. In addition, we promoted the campaign at community events using signage and specially designed literature.

A total of 1,689 Narcan kits were distributed during May and June, a combined result of the campaign and other distribution efforts.





COCA's Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz presented on the Health to Go Vending Machine at the National Rx and Illicit Drug Summit in April 2025

Health to Go Vending Machine

Items Dispensed: 5,583

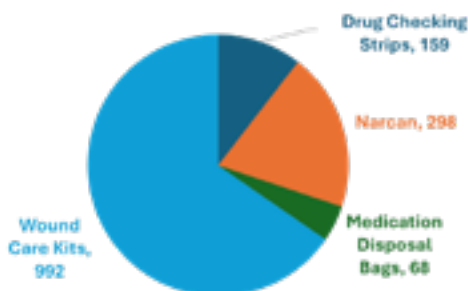
Includes 1,517 Harm Reduction Items

In May 2024, the "Health To Go" Smart Vending Machine, situated in the lobby of the Reading YMCA, was launched through a collaboration of the Penn State College of Medicine and the SOS Berks Opioid Coalition. Not only does the machine dispense wellness and harm reduction items at no cost, but the 42" interactive touch screen allows users to find information on nearby social services, food banks, housing, health care and more.

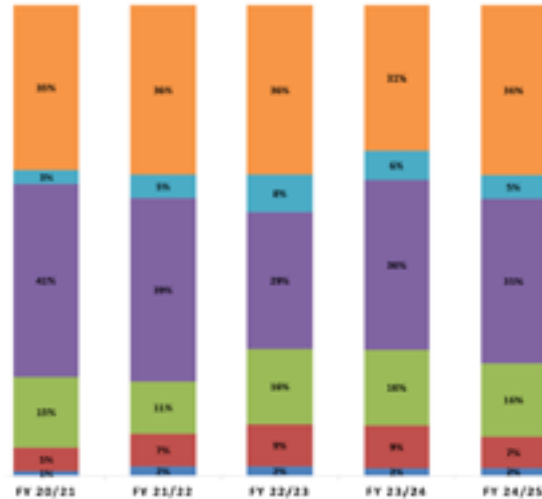
"You know, there's so much going on in this town. People can safeguard themselves, and that makes a difference. I just lost someone to an overdose a few weeks ago..." - User feedback

Feedback from users, acquired through focus groups and surveys, speaks to the positive impact of this innovative approach. Through its low barrier access to health resources, this vending machine has been well-received by the community with 82% of users reporting that resources have improved their personal health. The "Health To Go" leadership team has shared the first year of operations at both national and state substance use conferences. User feedback and first year data attests to the invaluable impact of this resource and the importance of sustaining its operation.

**HEALTH TO GO VENDING MACHINE
HARM REDUCTION ITEMS DISPENSED
JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025**



Primary Drug for People Admitted for Treatment Through COCA Funding



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

671 Individuals

Received Pre-Treatment Services at Berks County Jail

These services use an evidence-based curriculum to engage people in treatment.

Treatment Services

Individuals Funded for Treatment: 1,292

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 1,292 individuals were funded for 1,331 treatment episodes in fiscal year 2024/25. There were 297 episodes involving residential levels of care (i.e. withdrawal management, residential treatment and halfway house) and 1,078 episodes involving outpatient levels of care (i.e. intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization and medication-assisted treatment). Note that a single treatment episode can span multiple levels of care.

Treatment Access

Requests to COCA: 2,228

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 CENTER Recovery Support Groups

Addiction recovery is not a one-size-fits-all journey, but a network of pathways that honor individual strengths, needs, and circumstances. Recovery can be found through mutual aid and peer support, faith-based programs, community engagement, harm reduction strategies, or holistic approaches that address mind, body, and spirit. Each pathway provides opportunities for healing, growth, and reconnection.

Berks RISE (Recovery – Information – Support – Education) Center hosts several recovery support group meetings that provide a safe, welcoming space where individuals affected by substance use disorder or other addictive diseases can connect, share experiences, and encourage one another on the journey of healing. This past year, the Berks Rise Center hosted the following recovery support groups:

- Young People in Recovery*
- SMART Recovery*
- Ramadeus Recovery – for professionals*
- Gamblers Anonymous*
- Un Nuevo Dia - Spanish speaking*
- Tobacco Cessation Classes*
- Winners Circle - for men involved in the criminal justice system*

Recognizing and respecting diverse routes reinforces the message that recovery is real, possible, and sustainable for anyone willing to take the first step. By fostering hope, mutual support and resilience, recovery support group meetings become a cornerstone for long-term recovery and personal growth.



Jose Lugo of Recovery Coaching Services speaks during a Lunch & Learn at Berks RISE Center

RECOVERY

Individuals who received Recovery Housing Services	232
Individuals who received Case Management Services	1,423
Individuals who received Treatment Follow-Up Contacts	1,100
Individuals who attended Recovery Support Services	392
Bed days provided to individuals in Recovery Housing	31,865



About 50 members of the recovery community gathered at the RISE Center to watch the Eagles win Super Bowl LIX. Recovery football parties are among the many RISE Center activities that foster socialization.

Socialization for Recovery

Community connectedness and socialization are widely recognized as evidence-based strategies in addiction recovery. They strengthen protective factors while reducing risks of relapse. In FY 24/25, the Berks RISE Center hosted numerous social events including the annual Berks Recovery Walk, recovery football, Taco Tuesdays, recovery bingo, Saturday movie matinees, lunch and learns, Sundaes on Friday and holiday luncheons.

More than 600 people participated in RISE Center social events and support meetings last year.

That number includes over 60 people who completed 10-week Certified Recovery Specialist trainings. Socialization isn't just "being around people"—it's the intentional use of positive, recovery-oriented social networks to build belonging, accountability, coping skills, and resilience.



Top: Conference organizer Yvonne Stroman greets the audience, joined by Berks County Commissioners Christian Leinbach, Michael Rivera and Dante Santoni
 Bottom: Winners of the 2024 COCA Conference Awards (L to R) Officer Samuel Calabria, Scott Althouse, Kerin Kohler, Dr. John Vafeas, Barbara Lopez, Dr. Sara George, Dr. Danelle Bower, Gregory Day, and Donna Garipoli, accompanied by Berks Co. Commissioners Michael Rivera and Christian Leinbach.

2024 Annual Conference

In November, the 2024 COCA Annual Conference hosted nearly 200 professionals at the DoubleTree Hotel in Reading. The conference focused on the theme of Addressing Substance Use Across the Lifespan, and featured workshops on marijuana legislation, PAYS data, prenatal care and strategies for older adults. A panel presentation featured diverse people in recovery, and a lunch time awards ceremony recognized those doing outstanding work in substance use prevention, treatment and recovery.

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

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 Dr. Elizabeth Matteo
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 Kevin Rudy
 Dr. Kristen Sandel

Staff Members

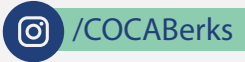
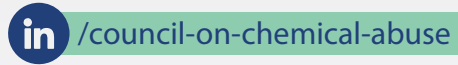
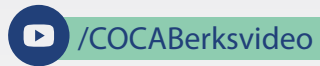
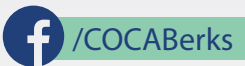
Kathleen F. Noll, Executive Director
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 Nicole Charlanza, Harm Reduction Coordinator
 Teresa Tieman Detweiler, Prevention Specialist
 Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, Director of Planning & Resource Development
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 Cynthia Martorana, Fiscal Technician
 Amber Moyer, Prevention Specialist
 Paul Russell, IT Administrator
 Sonia Santiago, Prevention Specialist
 Nickie Seshan, Office Manager
 Zoe Stankiewicz, Prevention Specialist
 Jaclyn Steed, Assistant Administrator
 Yvonne Stroman, Community Programs Specialist
 Anastasia Tomko, Digital Media Specialist

All positions as of June 30, 2025



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.



COCABerks.org
(610) 376-8669