As we enter another New Year and think about some of the resolutions we may make, my guess is that many resolutions are made in order to “prevent” something. The Office of Drug & Alcohol funds prevention programming, the majority of which occurs in the school districts throughout Montgomery County, by four contracted, prevention agencies. Benjamin Franklin’s quote basically means that a little precaution (i.e. prevention) before a crisis occurs is preferable to a lot of fixing up afterward!

We are all aware the nation is in the midst of an Opioid Crisis. If only we could have predicted such a crisis - we may have been able to prevent it in the first place. Unfortunately, we did not and we are now left to a lot of fixing up afterward!

However, I want to share with you a true story which gives me hope that prevention efforts ARE working here in Montgomery County. A co-worker of mine shared that her husband had been suffering for weeks with cold symptoms and severe coughing. Her husband went to see a doctor who prescribed cough medicine with codeine (an opiate). My co-worker’s twelve (12) year old son noticed the bottle of cough medicine sitting on the kitchen counter and became visibly upset, asking his mom, “why is that here? It shouldn’t be in the house.” Mom asked him why and he said “because it’s an opiate. Daddy could get addicted.” Mom assured her son that it was only to be used until it was gone and that Daddy would not become addicted. When mom asked her son where he learned about codeine – his answer was school! The school district this child attends is Norristown. Let’s hope this message is being carried far and wide within our school districts throughout Montgomery County.

Another way that our office is spreading prevention messaging is through the billboard competition whereby high school students in all Montgomery County School Districts are being asked to create an opioid awareness message which will be displayed on billboards throughout the County. Public voting will take place on the county website between January 31, 2019 and February 15, 2019. Please take a moment to vote by visiting www.montcopa.org/hhs!

Additionally, at the inaugural Montgomery County Student Assistance Program (SAP) Conference last fall, 150 professionals from school districts and prevention provider agencies gathered to learn about drug and alcohol and mental health issues affecting our youth in Montgomery County.

Welcome to the New Year; I hope that with some prevention efforts in your own lives, it turns out to be a great one for all of you!

Sincerely,
Kay McGowan
Opioid misuse is a crucial public health issue nationwide. A large proportion of federal funds have been allocated to address this crisis in regards to treatment by the way of increasing access to recovery resources and educating the public on the use of naloxone. However, one of the best strategies for addressing any public health issue is through prevention. To this point, prevention efforts have placed a great deal of focus on prescription drug monitoring programs, educating providers on prescribing trends of non-illicit opioids, and increasing community awareness surrounding safe disposal practices.

However, as we have seen with tobacco and marijuana misuse, addiction is frequently a disorder that has an early onset in adolescence, underscoring the need for adequate prevention strategies targeted towards this age group. Youth who start using substances later in adolescence have been shown to be less likely to develop an addiction compared to those who initiate substances earlier in young adulthood (Compton & Volkow, 2006). Both nationwide and locally, opioid use has been decreasing for older adolescents in grade 12 as shown by results from the Monitoring the Future national survey and the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS). Conversely, rates have actually increased or remained stable for younger adolescents. According to 2017 PAYS data, both lifetime use and 30-day use of prescription narcotics increased from 2015 to 2017 among 6th and 8th grade students in Montgomery County.

Research has found that programs designed to increase skill-building and improve social engagement are one of the most effective ways to prevent adolescent substance abuse. Programs of this type help children develop skills against peer pressure, notice risky situations, and refuse tempting offers.

One program that has been shown to be especially effective at addressing youth opioid use is Life Skills Training (LST). A National Institutes of Health (NIH), funded study, which evaluated the use of PROSPER (PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience) found positive results with LST, even when compared against other programs such as All Stars and Project ALERT. In this analysis, receipt of LST led to a significantly reduced probability of youth having ever used prescription opioids for nonmedical purposes by grade 12 compared to the control condition, and it was the only program that, when delivered alone, led to significant reduction in use (Crowley, Jones, Coffman, & Greenberg, 2014). Even more, LST when coupled with another program- Strengthening Families Program (SFP)- resulted in even greater reductions in opioid use. SFP was developed and tested in the 1980s on a NIDA research grant and, since its creation, has grown even more. Now, it has evolved to include culturally adapted versions and is available in 36 countries. Its curriculum is developed for both general and high-risk families, and low-cost alternatives in the form of DVDs are available. Likewise, another newer version incorporates mindfulness and parenting skills needed to prevent the use of alcohol and drugs.

Similarly, calculations from the study found that communities that implemented LST put out $613 and saved $6,887 for each child that the program prevented from engaging in opioid misuse. Moreover, LST has already been shown to be beneficial in reducing the use of other substances such as tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol, meaning additional benefit to communities that already utilize the program. In Montgomery County, LST has been in effect for over 600 sessions, impacting nearly 3,000 participants, which underlines its cost-effectiveness even more.

Resources

Compton WM, Volkow ND. Abuse of prescription drugs and the risk of addiction. Drug and Alcohol Dependence. 2006;83:S4–S7


Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol VAPING TOOLKIT

Resources for schools, parents, educators, and health care providers

Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol releases a Vaping Toolkit for schools, parents, educators, and health care providers.

Montgomery County Vaping Toolkit
In November, we welcomed Nia Coaxum as our newest member of the Montgomery County Office of Drug & Alcohol. Nia comes from Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems, where she was a Prevention Specialist and facilitated drug and alcohol prevention programs for the community in Delaware County. Prior to working at Holcomb, she was a Behavioral Health Worker in Philadelphia at Resources for Human Development. Nia received her Bachelors of Science in Public Health as well as her Masters of Public Health from West Chester University. She is also a Certified Health Education Specialist.

Please welcome Nia to the Montgomery County D&A community as she gets out and about to various meetings and Provider visits. **We are excited to have her join the County Drug & Alcohol team!**

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**Substance Abuse FACTS**

Substance abuse is a pandemic in the United States. From the abuse of seemingly innocent substances such as marijuana and alcohol to the abuse of street drugs like cocaine and heroin, substance abuse costs individuals substantially, and it costs the nation as a whole. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Illicit drug use costs the United States approximately $181 billion annually.
- Excessive alcohol use costs the country approximately $235 billion annually.

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**GUIDELINES**

- Open to all Montgomery County high school students
- Original artwork
- Creative, unique ideas
- MUST focus on opioid overdose (Heroin, Percocet, Fentanyl, Oxycodone, etc.)
- No inappropriate or discriminatory language or symbols
- No copyrighted or trademarked characters or logos

**SUBMISSIONS DUE JANUARY 25, 2019**

Questions? Please contact:
Jazelle Erazo jeerazo@montcopa.org
or Nia Coaxum ncoaxum@montcopa.org

Check out Montgomery County’s Department of Health & Human Services Website
**Help Starts Here!**
**www.montcopa.org/hhs**
Is a Little Drinking Really so Bad?

Getting to the bottom of how much you can safely knock back, according to lots of new studies

by Hallie Levine, AARP, September 20, 2018

If you’re like most Americans, you probably don’t think twice about enjoying a big glass (or two) of wine with your dinner every night or settling into your favorite armchair with a Scotch every evening. After all, studies have shown that an occasional cocktail is actually good for you, right?

Unfortunately, a raft of new research appears to burst that big champagne bubble. Not only do these headline-making studies put a big question mark next to the idea that drinking wine helps your heart, they also take aim at moderate drinking in particular, showing that drinking too much for your health might be drinking what seems to you like not that much at all.

One of the big pieces of research that’s driving home this point was published last month in the Lancet. It was notable because it combined almost 600 studies on how much people drank across the globe and what the effects were on their health. The big take away from it was that worldwide, drinking — and not only heavy drinking— was linked to deaths from not only car accidents and liver disease but also cancer, tuberculosis and heart disease.

Some researchers suggested that you can’t compare the results of drinking across countries where the top risks of death vary widely (in some places, TB; in the U.S., heart disease.) Still, the study, and others like it, cast doubt on the idea of the protective health benefits of a glass of red wine, something that’s been held as true since the 1980s, when researchers began exploring the “French paradox” to try to figure out why the country had such low rates of heart disease despite a diet high in saturated fat. They quickly decided it was thanks to drinking copious amounts of red wine, which contains heart-healthy antioxidants such as resveratrol, procyanidins and quercetin. Studies began to show drinking vino correlated with lower rates of death from heart disease; in an even happier twist, research showed other types of alcohol, like beer and liquor, bestowed cardiovascular benefits. But more recent studies have told a different story about liquor as heart health elixir. A University of Cambridge analysis published earlier this year, for example, looked at almost 600,000 drinkers and found that sipping more than five alcoholic drinks a week raised risk of dying from ... heart disease. (It also found that people who consumed more than 10 drinks per week had one to two years’ shorter life expectancy overall, while those who downed at least 18 shaved four to five years off their life.) Other research has actually found the people who have a genetic variant that suppresses the desire to drink alcohol have a lower risk of developing heart disease. “Those studies poke holes in the belief that alcohol is protective against developing heart disease,” says Dariush Mozaffarian, a cardiologist and dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University.

Still, other experts say you don’t need to toss your nightcap out just yet. “I don’t think this analysis should change conclusions or recommendations about moderate alcohol consumption,” says Walter Willett, M.D., professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “It’s important to keep this in perspective — the risks from just one drink a day are much smaller than those of smoking or being obese.” While he believes the current recommended limit of one drink a day for women and two for men are reasonable, “this does need to be considered on an individual basis with your health care provider,” he says. A young, healthy woman with a family history of breast cancer, for example, may want to avoid alcohol entirely, since even small amounts slightly raise cancer risk. But for most older adults, moderate drinking is not off the table, provided you follow these four caveats:

Stick like glue to “moderate” drinking

According to the federal government, that’s defined as no more than a drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men. But it’s also important to get a clear picture of what a drink is. “So many people whip out a gigantic wine glass and fill it to the top with their favorite merlot — that’s not one drink, that’s two to four,” says Mozaffarian. A standard drink consists of either 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits such as vodka or whiskey, or 8-9 ounces of malt liquor. If you’re in doubt, you can always measure it out. “At this level, risk for health problems is minimal,” says Michael Hochman, M.D., director of the Gehr Family Center for Health Systems Science at the University of Southern California. The Lancet analysis found only a .5 percent higher risk of developing an alcohol-related health problem among those who consume only a drink per day.

(continued on page 5)
Don’t “bank” your drinks

You may wonder if you’re in the “safe” zone because you drink only two to three times a week, but have multiple drinks each time. You’re not. This type of drinking puts stress on your liver, can increase your blood pressure, and increases your risk of doing something reckless, like driving drunk. Even if you drink wine only twice a week, stay within the daily recommended limits. “As you get older, you’re more susceptible to the effects of alcohol, because your body loses its ability to metabolize it as efficiently — so as a result, you’re more likely to feel its effects,” adds Hochman. This in turn can set you up for things such as falls.

Don’t drink at all if you have liver disease or you’re at risk for developing it

The older you are, the more likely you are to develop fatty liver disease, a condition where too much fat is stored in your liver cells, says Jamile Wakim-Fleming, a gastroenterologist specializing in liver disease at the Cleveland Clinic. Doctors often order liver function tests as part of your regular checkup, especially if you’re on medications that can affect your liver function, such as statins. If your most recent blood work has shown elevations in liver enzymes such as alanine transaminase (ALT), aspartate transaminase (AST) or alkaline phosphatase (ALP), you should avoid alcohol completely.

Don’t drink because you think it’s good for your health

If you’ve had your nightly martini ritual for the last 30 years, it’s fine to continue it, but don’t start drinking because you think it’s good for you. “There’s never been a guideline issued by groups such as the American Heart Association or the U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommending alcohol; the language has always been, if you do drink, do it in moderation,” says Mozaffarian.

Montgomery County Offices of Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health in partnership with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, hosted its first Student Assistance Program (SAP) Conference. The SAP Conference brought together teachers, nurses and school counselors for a day of training and information around drug and alcohol issues, mental health concerns and trauma.

An initiative through the Pennsylvania Department of Health Public Health Preparedness Program

On Thursday, December 13th, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services participated in Stop Overdoses in PA: Get Help Now Week, a statewide initiative to get the overdose reversal medication naloxone to Pennsylvanians and get help for residents suffering from the disease of opioid-use disorder. Two hundred forty-six (246) NARCAN® Nasal Spray Kits were distributed free of charge, no questions asked to residents at the three public health centers in Montgomery County.

If you or someone you know needs help, please call 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Thank you to the Office of Integrative Services for coordinating with the Offices of Public-Health, Drug & Alcohol, and Community Information & Education on the Department’s efforts and execution of this event.
Montgomery County Drug and Alcohol Prevention Project
Mini Grant Update
2018-2019

In October 2017, the Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol launched its mini grant project coordinated by Family Services of Montgomery County. This mini grant project is designed to support local groups and organizations in their drug and alcohol prevention efforts. Below is a list of projects funded to date for the 2018-19 award cycle (7/1/18 – 6/30/19).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini Grant Recipient</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Norriton Township Police Department</td>
<td>LEAD certification training for school resource officer (Too Good for Drugs)</td>
<td>$2,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abington Township Police Department</td>
<td>Keepin’ It REAL/DARE program for 700 6th grade students</td>
<td>$4,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methacton High School Post Prom Committee</td>
<td>Support for Methacton High School’s post-prom event</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Path</td>
<td>Creative art workshops focusing on cultural diversity and ATOD messaging, culminating in Art Reception at local college</td>
<td>$3,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Perkiomen School District</td>
<td>Student Assistance Program (SAP) training for staff in grades K-12</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery Township Police Department</td>
<td>Keepin’ It REAL/DARE program for 300 5th grade students</td>
<td>$3,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwynedd Mercy University</td>
<td>Monthly Saturday night drug-free alternative activities on campus</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shipley School</td>
<td>8th, 9th, and 10th grade drug and alcohol prevention presentations supplemented with 8th grade Parent/Student Night</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Gwynedd Police Department</td>
<td>Mock Teen Bedroom Event at Upper Dublin High School</td>
<td>$1,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillae-Assumpta Academy</td>
<td>“Brain Drain” presentation for 7th grade; “Marijuana Facts” for 8th grade; Parent/Student presentation for 8th graders and their parents</td>
<td>$1,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Merion Township Police Department</td>
<td>Pre-prom assembly at Upper Merion High School focusing on anti-drug/alcohol awareness; photo booths with no-use messaging during Junior and Senior Prom events</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

December 20, 2018

Total Awarded: $30,730
The Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, (DDAP) has an **ONLINE registration system** for the trainings they sponsor. **You must register your personal information into the system as a “user” of the system.** You can access the online registration system at https://apps.ddap.pa.gov/TMS/. Simply follow the instructions to register yourself if you are a “New User” to the system and then register on-line for any of DDAP’s **Mini-Regional or Specialized** sponsored trainings. For **On-Site** trainings held at various provider agencies; simply contact the person listed as the contact person for the training and they will officially register you for the specific training in the TMS system. In both cases, you will receive email notification that you are registered for the training. As a user of the system, you can routinely check and print reports of where trainings are being held throughout the state.

Please try to make visiting the DDAP training website a routine part of your work life.

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**Training Opportunities**

**Berks County Community Foundation**  
237 Court Street  
Reading, PA 19601  
1/31/2019 **ISS: Service Planning and Record Keeping**  
9am - 4pm  
Registration: Contact Brian Kammerer at 610-376-8669 or bkammerer@cocaberks.org  
Fee: $20.00

**Key Recovery**  
5000 Hilltop Drive  
Brookhaven, PA 19015  
1/31/2019 **Addictions 101**  
9am - 4pm  
Registration: Contact Lisa Ann Blair at 610-713-2365 or blairla@delcohsa.org  
Fee: No Cost

**Valley Forge Medical Center**  
1033 W. Germantown Pike  
Norristown, PA 19403  
2/5/2019 **Adult Children of Alcoholics**  
9am - 4pm  
Registration: Contact Monique Harding at 610-539-8500 or mharding@vfmc.net  
Fee: $20.00

**Compass Mark**  
630 Janet Avenue  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
2/7/2019 **Confidentiality**  
9am - 4pm  
Registration: Contact Amy Sechrist at 717-299-2831 or asechrist@compassmark.org  
Fee: None

**Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission**  
600 Louis Drive, Suite 102A  
Warminster, PA 18974  
1/4/2019 **Addictions 101**  
9am - 4pm  
2/12/2019 **Case Management Overview**  
9am - 4pm  
Registration: Contact Margie Rivera at 215-773-9313 or mcrivera@buckscounty.org  
Fee: $15.00

**Retreat Outpatient Facility**  
333 South 7th Street  
Akron, PA 17501  
2/1/2019 **Basic HIV**  
9am - 4pm  
2/7/2019 **TB/STD/Hepatitis**  
9am - 1pm  
Registration: Contact Katie Martin at 717-859-8000 or katiem@retreatmail.com  
Fee: None

**BHTEN**  
520 N. Delaware Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19123  
2/4/2019 **Basic HIV**  
9am - 4pm  
2/4/2019 **TB/STD/Hepatitis**  
9am - 1pm  
2/11/2019 **Addictions 101**  
9am - 4pm  
Fee: $25.00

**Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs**  
2601 N. 3rd Street One Penn Center, 5th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
2/4/2019 **Case Management Overview**  
9am - 4pm  
2/8/2019 **Clinical Supervision Training**  
9am - 4pm  
Registration: Jessica Morrison at 717-736-7452 or jemorrison@pa.gov  
Fee: $300.00

**Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (Program Licensing)**  
2601 N. 3rd Street One Penn Center, 5th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
2/12/2019 **Standards Applications Workshop**  
9am - 4pm  
(DDAP Licensing Training)  
Registration: Contact Nancy Buczeskie at 717-706-1040 or nbuczeskie@pa.gov  
Fee: No Cost
### WEBSITE INFORMATION

Did you know... There is quite a bit of useful information on the Montgomery County Drug and Alcohol website?

- Support Group Websites and Meetings (AA, NA, Al-Anon, etc.)
- The State and Federal Agencies for Substance Abuse Services.
- Apply for Medical Assistance On-Line.
- PRO-ACT Ambassadors for Recovery, and more…

Check it out!  
Will link you directly to our web page.

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### GET THE FACTS!

**Substance Abuse**

What are the signs of a drug problem?

While anyone who uses an addictive drug may be hooked with only a few uses, drug addictions signs generally involve continued use despite a decline in health or happiness.

What are the most commonly abused drugs?

Cannabis products, including marijuana and hash, are the most commonly abused drugs. Prescription drugs, cocaine and hallucinogens are also popular and addictive substances.

What Causes Addictions?

The answer to this is only a theory, but scientists theorize that addiction is both a genetic trait and a learned behavior. While a person’s genes may set him or her up for the potential for addiction, exposure to drugs may be the catalyst for exposing these addictive tendencies.

**Dependence, Abuse and Addiction**

While drug use often begins as a way to seek recreation, the addictive properties of drugs quickly turn a perceived outlet for fun into a constant need to remain high. This compulsion is uncontrollable and may interfere with a person’s everyday life.

While substance abuse comes with a great many side effects, ranging from mild physical side effects like nausea and dehydration to work-related consequences such as reduced productivity, one of the greatest risks of substance abuse is dependence.

What might begin as the occasional bump of cocaine or hit on the bong can quickly spiral into dependence and eventually full-blown addiction. Once addiction takes hold, comprehensive treatment is needed.

Even when the effects of drugs are damaging to a person’s body and relationships with friends, family members and coworkers, the constant need for a substance often overcomes any rational thinking.

Per NIDA, addiction is a persisting disease that requires ongoing management. Individuals are never “cured” of addictions; instead, they learn how to manage their disease so they can lead healthy, balanced lives. (For Help see Resources page 9)

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### Need Drug and Alcohol Treatment?

"HELP STARTS HERE"

The Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol provides admission to outpatient and inpatient care for eligible uninsured persons seeking drug and alcohol treatment. If you or someone you know is seeking treatment and would like more information about eligibility or where to go …

Please contact one of the Case Management Offices below:

Call: 610-278-3642

- Preference for treatment placement is given to Pregnant Women, Injecting Drug Users, Overdose Survivors and Veterans

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#### Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol

**Help Starts Here!**

**Creative Health Services**  
(610) 327-1503  
11 Robinson Street  
Pottstown, PA 19464

**Gaudenzia, Norristown**  
(610) 279-4262  
166 W. Main Street  
Norristown, PA 19401

**Gaudenzia, Willow Grove/Dresher**  
(215) 433-1634  
Dresher Professional Building  
830 Twining Road, Suite 1  
Dresher, PA 19025

**Penn Foundation Recovery Ctr.**  
(215) 257-9999  
807 Lawn Avenue  
Sellersville, PA 18960

**Penn Foundation Recovery Ctr.**  
(267) 452-1910  
271 N. Bethlehem Pike, Suite 201  
Colmar, PA 18915

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“If things go wrong, don’t go with them.”  
- Roger Babson
Mission Statement: The Montgomery County Office of Drug & Alcohol is committed to the prevention and treatment of substance abuse in Montgomery County. Services are delivered in a partnership with qualified Providers and guided by a philosophy that imparts hope, respect and support for recovery.

“This Connection” is sponsored by:
The Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol, Montgomery County Human Services Center
1430 DeKalb Street, Box 311, Norristown, PA 19404-0311.

For more information or to be placed on the mailing list for this newsletter contact: Darnice Stephens at dstephe2@montcopa.org or call 610-278-3642.

This newsletter is made possible by funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, and the Montgomery County Commissioners. The County of Montgomery makes no representations or warranties as to the suitability of this information for your particular purpose, and that to the extent you use or implement this information in your own setting, you do so at your own risk. The information provided herewith is solely for your own use and cannot be sold. In no event will the County of Montgomery be liable for any damages whatsoever, whether direct, consequential, incidental, special, or claim for attorney fees, arising out of the use of or inability to use the information provided herewith.