



# Opioid Epidemic TOOL KIT

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TACKLE THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY.  
PREVENTION. EDUCATION. AWARENESS.

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-  [STOPODCHESCO.ORG](https://stopodchesco.org)

# A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing the Opioid Epidemic in Chester County Communities

This tool kit will help you create and implement a complete plan to increase education and spread awareness in order to combat the opioid epidemic in your community.

Chester County is not immune to the opioid epidemic. Sadly, we lost over 140 lives to accidental drug overdose in Chester County last year. Additionally, hundreds more have overdosed but survived, often due to the actions of first responders. These overdoses and deaths have occurred throughout all areas of Chester County, and can occur in any community.

In an effort to combat the opioid epidemic, [the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#) created an Opioid Epidemic Community Toolkit to aid in community involvement to fight the opioid epidemic.

We hope you'll join us by engaging your communities in conversations that educate and generate awareness on the opioid epidemic, and the role each of us play in combating it.

Feel free to use any of the information listed in this tool kit, or any of the information found on [Chesco.org/DrugandAlcohol](#) or [StopODChesco.org](#).

**Below is a menu of options for your community group or organization.  
You can pick one, multiple, or even all to implement in your  
community.**

**1. Get Trained**

- a. Naloxone (Narcan®)
- b. Opioid Epidemic in Chester County
- c. How to Access Treatment

**2. Stock your Organization with Resources**

- a. Resource Library
- b. County Department Resource
- c. How to get more Information
- d. PA Stop Campaign
- e. Realtor Education

**3. Add Information to Social Media and Websites**

- a. Opioid and Heroin Epidemic in Chester County
- b. Overdose Prevention Task Force
- c. Overdose Prevention Task Force Website
- d. Addiction
- e. How to Access Treatment
- f. Medication Collection Boxes
- g. Naloxone
- h. Naloxone in the Community
- i. Recovery is Possible
- j. Drug and Alcohol Prevention

**4. Community Events**

- a. Documentary Screenings

**5. Stay Connected**

- a. Like us on Facebook
- b. Sign up for our Newsletter
- c. Get Involved

**1. Get Trained**

**a. Naloxone (Narcan®) – an overdose reversal medication**

**i. Attend a Community Naloxone Training**

- [Good Fellowship Ambulance & EMS Training Institute](#) (Good Fellowship) has partnered with Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services to reduce the incidence of accidental drug overdoses. Join us to learn about opioids, naloxone and accessing treatment in Chester County.

- [Upcoming Trainings link](#)

**ii. Host a Community Naloxone Training**

- Good Fellowship has partnered with Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services to reduce the incidence of accidental drug overdoses. Join us to learn about opioids, naloxone and accessing treatment in Chester County.
- If you would like to host one of these trainings, please contact Ethan Healey (information below).
- Ethan Healey, Project Naloxone Manager, Good Fellowship EMS Training Institute, [ehealey@goodfellowship.org](mailto:ehealey@goodfellowship.org)

**b. Host an Overdose Prevention Task Force Presentation**

- i. [The Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force](#) was formed in March 2015 to coordinate overdose death prevention efforts between various organizations. The Task Force is led by the [Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#), [Chester County District Attorney's Office](#), [Chester County Health Department](#), [Chester County Human Services](#), and [Good Fellowship Ambulance and EMS Training Institute](#). The mission of the Task Force is to prevent overdose deaths in Chester County through a multidisciplinary, coordinated effort between government departments, community organizations, and treatment providers.

- ii. The Task Force delivers an hour and a half presentation which covers the history of the opioid epidemic, naloxone, how to access treatment, and community efforts. Each presentation can be tailored to the specific population.

- iii. If you would like the Task Force to deliver a presentation for your community group or organization, submit a presentation request form here: [Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force Presentation](#).

**c. Get Informed on “How to Access Treatment”**

- i. [The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#) can provide an “in-service” training for your facility, community group, or organization which reviews how to access treatment in Chester County.

- ii. If interested, submit a request to Jamie Johnson, Deputy Director at [jajohnson@chesco.org](mailto:jajohnson@chesco.org) or Kate Genther, Prevention Specialist at [kgenther@chesco.org](mailto:kgenther@chesco.org).

**2. Stock your Organization with Resources:** Having brochures, flyers, handouts, etc. is a vital part of spreading education and awareness in the community. On average, it takes a person several times of seeing or hearing a message before they remember it.

- a. [The COAD Group in Exton, Pa](#) has a resource library which is stocked with informational material available to community groups and organizations FREE of charge.
- b. [The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#) created several printed materials to help spread awareness and educate community members. The materials include:
  - i. [General Resource Card \(Salmon\)](#) - This covers several resources in Chester County including, but not limited to, domestic violence, crisis intervention, hospitals, drug and alcohol treatment entry points, etc.
  - ii. [Overdose Information Card \(Purple\)](#) - This covers general information surrounding an overdose such as what opioids are, what an overdose is, what naloxone is, and how to access treatment in Chester County.
  - iii. [Naloxone \(Narcan\) Brochure](#) - This brochure includes information on the opioid antagonist (overdose reversal) medication Naloxone. Additionally, the brochure has the entry points for drug and alcohol treatment in Chester County.
  - iv. [Medication Collection Box Brochure](#) - This brochure has the Medication Collection Box addresses in Chester County, what is accepted, and what is not accepted.
- c. If interested in materials from [the COAD Group](#) or [Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#), contact Kate Genthert, [kgenthert@chesco.org](mailto:kgenthert@chesco.org).
- d. [The Commonwealth Prevention Alliance \(CPA\) coalition](#) created several materials including billboards, PSA's, flyers, etc., in order to spread education and awareness to Pennsylvania residents. All of these materials are available for organizations across the state to download through the [PA Stop website](#).
- e. As we know the disease of addiction knows no bounds, and with the rise of the opioid epidemic, there was an increase of prescription drug theft during open houses or home tours. Chester County partnered with Delaware County and Montgomery County to educate realtors at Suburban West Realtors Association on the dangers of prescription drug theft. Additionally, information was added to Suburban West Realtors Association website and a flyer was created for realtors to disseminate for seller education. More information can be found [here](#).

**3. Add Information to Your Social Media Accounts, Website, Newsletters, etc.:** The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services crafted a series of educational topics surrounding the opioid epidemic. See topics below. For questions regarding topics, please contact Kate Genthert, [kgenthert@chesco.org](mailto:kgenthert@chesco.org). See topics below.

**a. Opioid and Heroin Epidemic in Chester County**

- i. Across the United States, there were over 64,000 fatal drug overdoses in 2016. The state of Pennsylvania alone saw over 4,600 fatal drug overdoses in 2016, a 37% increase from 2015. Each day across Pennsylvania 13 lives are lost to fatal drug overdose. Chester County is not immune to the heroin and opioid epidemic. Sadly, we lost nearly 150 lives to accidental drug

overdose in Chester County last year. Additionally, hundreds more have overdosed but survived, often due to the actions of first responders. These overdoses and deaths have occurred throughout the County, and can occur in any community.

[The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#) is dedicated to combating the opioid and heroin epidemic through prevention, intervention, treatment, and collaborative efforts with other County and community-based organizations.

In addition to the provision of prevention, intervention and treatment services, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services has implemented and participates in other initiatives; two of those are the Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force and public education and distribution of naloxone in the County.

**b. Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force**

- i. [The Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force](#) was formed in March 2015 to coordinate overdose prevention efforts between various organizations. The Task Force Leadership Team, co-chaired by the Director of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services and the First Assistant District Attorney, consists of the Chester County [Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#), the [Chester County District Attorney's Office](#), the [Chester County Health Department](#), the [Chester County Human Services](#), and [Good Fellowship Ambulance and EMS Training Institute](#).

In addition to the Task Force leadership, there are over [40 different community groups and organizations](#) that are a part of the Task Force.

The mission of the Task Force is to prevent overdose deaths in Chester County through multidisciplinary, coordinated effort between government departments, community organizations, and treatment providers. Since the inception of the Task Force there have been many activities and events, including: community symposia, presentations, and outreach; continuing medical education events for health care providers; naloxone standing order; naloxone distribution; and medication drop box data collection.

A website has also been developed to provide information and resources related to opioid epidemic and can be accessed at: [StopODChesco.org](#).

**c. Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force Website**

- i. [The Chester County Overdose Prevention Task Force](#) created an informational website to serve as a resource to Chester County residents. The website covers facts and statistics, how to get help, what naloxone is, and much more. The website can be found at StopODChesco.org.
- ii. Share the website link so others can use the website as a resource. You can share on:
  1. Your organization's website and/or social media pages.
  2. You can add a banner to your email signature. See banner below.



**d. Addiction**

- i. Addiction is a chronic brain disease characterized by one's compulsion, or lack of self-control, leading them to engage in drug seeking behavior regardless of consequences. A heroin or opioid addiction typically begins with a person taking prescription pain killers, which may have been legally prescribed or illegally obtained from a friend, family member, or acquaintance. Prescription pain killers, such as Vicodin, Percocet, Oxycodone, Fentanyl, and Morphine, among others, are in the opioid classification of prescription drugs. These prescription drugs essentially have the same chemical make-up as heroin, which means they affect the brain and body the same. Over time, these drugs can alter the chemistry in the brain's reward center resulting in increased tolerance. Increased tolerance means that a person needs more of the substance to achieve the same effect or "high". As a person's tolerance increases, so does the potential for withdraw. Withdrawal is the group of symptoms that can occur when a person has decreased use or is no longer using. Withdrawal can include emotional, physical, behavioral, or physiological symptoms. The person then becomes dependent on the substance, which means the person begins using the substance to function "normally" in order to prevent them from going into withdrawal from that substance.

So, how does the transition from prescription pain killers to heroin occur? The simple answer is economics. When prescription opioids are prescribed by doctors and filled in pharmacies, they are affordable for the person whom they were prescribed to. When prescription opioids are obtained illegally, they are about \$10 per mg (a typical pill is 30-50 mg). As discussed earlier, heroin which essentially has the same chemical make-up as prescription opioids, costs only \$5-\$10/bag, and in the Philadelphia area, we have the cheapest and purest heroin across the US.

Now, there are a few scenario's which all lead to the same path. Keep in mind the following:

- Tolerance — a person needs more of a substance after continued use.
- Dependence — the persons need for the substance to function "normally" preventing withdraw.
- Economics — prescription opioid \$30-\$50/pill and heroin \$5-\$10/bag.

Scenario 1: A person is legally prescribed prescription opioids, develops an addiction, and run outs of their prescription. When they begin to decrease use they will begin to experience withdraw symptoms. Unable to refill the prescription at the pharmacy, they turn to obtaining the prescription opioid illegally from a dealer. Obtaining prescription painkillers illegally from a dealer becomes a large financial investment (higher tolerance

= more pills = more \$\$). The dealer suggests trying heroin, a cheaper alternative giving them the same effect.

Scenario 2: A person finds prescription opioids in their family members' medicine cabinet. They then begin illicit recreational use of the prescription opioids, and develop an addiction. They run out of the prescription opioid which was obtained illegally. When they begin to decrease use they will begin to experience withdraw symptoms. Unable to find more prescription opioids in their family members' medicine cabinet, they turn to obtaining the prescription opioid illegally from a dealer. Obtaining prescription painkillers illegally from a dealer becomes a large financial investment (higher tolerance = more pills = more \$\$). The dealer suggests trying heroin, a cheaper alternative giving them the same effect.

**e. How to Access Treatment**

- i. [Chester County's Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#) wants to ensure that residents are aware that there are drug and alcohol treatment services and other resources available in the county regardless of insurance coverage. If you are concerned about yourself, or a loved one, it's imperative that you seek help.
- ii. **If you have insurance**, including Medicaid, please call the number listed on the back of your insurance card to get information on how to access drug and alcohol services.
- iii. **If you do not have insurance**, please call one of the following agencies closest to you, for help:
  - **Gaudenzia Coatesville (Coatesville)** - 610-383-9600
  - **Mirmont Outpatient (Exton)** - 484-565-1130
  - **Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems (Kennett Square)** - 610-388-9225
  - **Creative Health Services (Phoenixville)** - 610-933-1223
  - **Gaudenzia West Chester (West Chester)** - 610-429-1414
- iv. If you have further questions, or need additional resources, please log onto the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services website: [chesco.org/216/Drug-Alcohol-Services](http://chesco.org/216/Drug-Alcohol-Services). You can also call the Chester County Information and Referral line at: 866-286-3767.

**f. Medication Collection Boxes**

- i. Prescription drug abuse is an ever-growing epidemic not only in Chester County, but across the nation. Commonly misused prescription drugs fall into three (3) different categories which include *opioids*, which are pain relievers and have a similar chemical make-up as heroin; *sedatives*, which are used to treat anxiety and depression; and *stimulants*, which increase attention, energy, blood pressure, heart rate and breathing rate.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the average age for the first use of prescription drugs in the United States is 13 years old. Prescription drugs are often mistaken by adolescents as a "safe" alternative to illegal street drugs, which leads to increasing use. In addition to the misconception that prescription

drugs are “safer” than illegal drugs, they are easily accessible in medicine cabinets and homes. Both of these factors lead to increased use.

In order to decrease first-time use of prescription drugs, it is imperative to begin with prevention efforts such as increasing education and spreading awareness. In addition to education and awareness, prescription drug misuse prevention includes locking up or monitoring prescription medications that are in the home and disposing of any unneeded or expired prescription medications at one of the prescription drug drop boxes located in Chester County.

To find a location near you, what is accepted, and what is not accepted, [click here](#). For driving directions to each location, [click here](#). If your organization is interested in prescription drug drop box signage or brochures to display, please contact Kate Gentert, [kgentert@chesco.org](mailto:kgentert@chesco.org).

Permanent Medication Collection boxes are a project of the Chester County District Attorney's Office Thomas P. Hogan, Chester County District Attorney with the support of the following State agencies: Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Chester County Commissioners, District Attorney, and Drug and Alcohol Services.

*\*Medication Collection Box locations in and around Coatesville are a result of a community partnership between Pennsylvania American Water the Brandywine Health Foundation, Coatesville Youth Initiative and the Police Chiefs of the City of Coatesville, Caln Township, West Caln Township, West Brandywine Township and Valley Township.*

*\*\*Medication Collection Box locations in Tredyffrin Township were provided by ARCH (Area Residents Caring and Helping) through a partnership with the Tredyffrin Community and Police Association. Tredyffrin Township was one of the first collection boxes in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*

**g. Naloxone (Narcan®)**

- i. Naloxone (brand names Narcan®, EVZIO) is a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. When given during an overdose, naloxone blocks the effects of opioids on the brain and restores breathing within two to eight minutes.
- ii. Naloxone has been used safely for over 40 years.
- iii. Naloxone can be administered via a nasal spray, intramuscular (a shot in the muscle), or through an IV (an injection in the veins).
- iv. You can get naloxone at most pharmacies. Although naloxone may not be available for same-day pick up, it can often be ordered and available within a day or two.
- v. Use Pennsylvania's standing order (a prescription written for the general public) issued by the Pennsylvania Physician General. The standing order is kept on file at many pharmacies, or may be downloaded [here](#).
- vi. Or, ask your doctor for a prescription.
- vii. To learn more about Naloxone, attend a local training. Trainings can be found [here](#).

viii. To see how Naloxone works in the brain, [click here](#).

**h. Naloxone in the Community**

- i. Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services has provided training and distribution of the lifesaving medication known as Naloxone (Narcan®) to treatment providers, park rangers, County departments, mental health providers, libraries, homeless shelters, grass-roots community-based organizations and others.
- ii. Through collaborations with the community-based organizations, Naloxone is also being distributed to the general public in Chester County with no cost to the consumer. This medication has been given to family members, friends and loved ones of those who suffer from the potentially lethal disease of addiction, specifically to opiates. To date, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services has purchased and facilitated distribution to over 1,700 doses of Naloxone to its various recipients.
- iii. [Good Fellowship Ambulance & EMS Training Institute](#) coordinates Project Naloxone which has trained every police department in Chester County on Naloxone. Additionally, Good Fellowship EMS Training Institute partners with the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services to deliver free Community Naloxone Trainings, which are held throughout Chester County. If you would like to attend training, [click here](#).

**i. Recovery is Possible**

- i. The disease of addiction knows no bounds. Addiction does not discriminate against age, race, socioeconomic status or education level. However, individuals suffering from the disease of addiction can “recover”; and many do every day.

In Chester County, there is a recovery support volunteer organization called [The Pennsylvania Recovery Organization - Achieving Community Together \(PRO-ACT\)](#), which is sponsored by the Council of Southeast Pennsylvania, Inc. If you are interested in getting involved with this organization, please contact Kate Genthert, [kgenthert@chesco.org](mailto:kgenthert@chesco.org).

Also, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services is always looking for stories of recovery to share in their newsletter. This is a way to promote hope and positivity to the community. If you are interested in sharing your story, please contact Kate Genthert, [kgenthert@chesco.org](mailto:kgenthert@chesco.org).

**j. Drug and Alcohol Prevention**

- i. An important service needed in the community to decrease substance misuse and abuse is prevention. This is action taken to prevent the misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs. Prevention primarily targets children but also includes parents, schools, and communities. Prevention targets all forms of drug misuse and abuse, including tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, inhalants and other drugs. Research shows us that prevention needs to begin early, be age appropriate, and long term.

In Chester County, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services contracts with two (2) prevention program providers and four (4) grassroots community coalitions called

[Communities That Care \(CTC\)](#). These contracted organizations implement prevention programs that target children, parents, schools and communities.

The Prevention Providers programming includes evidence-based prevention programming focusing on alcohol, tobacco, drugs, healthy relationship, and communication. All programming is FREE of charge to schools grades K-12 in Chester County. Additionally, the prevention providers coordinate the Student Assistance Program (SAP), information dissemination at community events and health fairs, speaking engagements tailored to populations, a FREE resource library, and a telephone information line. For more information on prevention programs, [click here](#).

#### **4. Community Events**

##### **a. Host Documentary Screenings**

- i. The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services have two (2) documentaries ([Generation Found](#) and [Anonymous People](#)) which are available for screenings in the community.
- ii. The screenings can be held at schools, township buildings, or other community organization locations.
- iii. Typically, at the screening event, other community groups and organizations will be invited, and there will be a panel discussion following the screening.
- iv. If you are interested in coordinating a screening, contact Kate Genthert, [kgenthert@chesco.org](mailto:kgenthert@chesco.org).

#### **5. Stay Connected**

##### **a. Facebook**

- i. Like us on Facebook to stay up-to-date with events:  
[Facebook.com/ChesterCountyHumanServices](https://www.facebook.com/ChesterCountyHumanServices)

##### **b. Newsletter**

- i. All Human Services Department newsletters (including the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services' newsletter) are now being sent via email.
- ii. To sign up, [click here](#).

##### **c. Get Involved**

- i. Attend a Community Event near you!
- ii. For a list of upcoming events, sign up for our newsletter (link above), check out the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services [website](#), or contact Kate Genthert, [kgenthert@chesco.org](mailto:kgenthert@chesco.org).