



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAMS

August 21, 2015

Dear Friends,

**September marks National Recovery Month.** The annual observance reinforces the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover. The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Drug and Alcohol Advisory Council and the Pennsylvania Parent Panel Advisory Council, will again be focusing our efforts on ***Building Bridges to Recovery***. We hope to make 2015 even better than last year!

To start things off, you are invited to a press event on August 31<sup>st</sup> for International Overdose Awareness Day at Gaudenzia's Concept 90 Program on the grounds of the old Harrisburg State Hospital. We are doing a lot to address overdose deaths, first by trying to reverse them with the drug naloxone what can be administered by most police, EMT personnel, and families or friends. Giving this drug buys time until the person can be transported to the emergency room. We are also trying to identify ways to have someone available to the ER staff to talk about treatment and recovery. While all this is great to do, we know that STIGMA still exists so you can help by continuing to talk about what can happen beyond the consequences of overdose and ongoing addiction. ....**RECOVERY! It's Possible!**

If you remember last year, we asked you as partners in this initiative, to identify how you might, as an individual or an organization, initiate dialogue with health care professionals to provide information about substance abuse and recovery. As an individual, this may include simply having a discussion with your physician about your own recovery, the struggles of getting services for your son or daughter, or taking a supply of informational brochures to be placed in the office waiting room. For providers or organizations, this may include inviting a local physician to be on a board or agency workgroup, offering to provide training or in-service to office personnel, or informing the medical practice about how to obtain substance abuse services for his or her patients in need.

We ask the same of you for this year, but equally important is if you, as an individual or organization, can send a Letter to the Editor or write an op-ed piece for local newspapers during the month of September. Persons in recovery can use the letter to tell their story of hope; parents and family members can talk about their loved one recovery path or belief that there is hope for family members still struggling with addiction; or treatment program staff can talk about why treatment works and share their successes.

DDAP will again be posting resources on our website ([www.ddap.pa.gov](http://www.ddap.pa.gov)) to help facilitate your involvement in Pennsylvania's Building Bridges to Recovery efforts. In order for us to keep a pulse of the involvement and the various strategies that will be undertaken, I ask that you kindly let DDAP know how you were able to reach out during the month (e.g., spoke with your physician, provided information brochures for office waiting room, sent a Letter to the Editor or wrote an op-ed article). You can do this by sending an email describing your efforts to [da-rabridgbl14@pa.gov](mailto:darabridgbl14@pa.gov).

If you plan to attend our kick-off event on August 31, at 10:00 AM, please contact Maureen Cleaver at [mcleaver@pa.gov](mailto:mcleaver@pa.gov) or call 717-736-7441 by August 27, 2015.

Thank you in advance for your partnership and commitment to reducing substance abuse disorders in Pennsylvania! We are grateful for your efforts in supporting those still suffering with this disease and for presenting living proof that recovery is real. I look forward to working with you in this life-saving work of **Building the Bridges of Recovery!**

Sincerely,



Gary Tennis, Secretary