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# AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

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*A Newsletter by Perry Human Services*

## **SPRING 2014**

A “Red Flag Warning” is issued by the U.S. National Weather Service to warn people about extremely dangerous weather conditions. Most people who hear such alerts will take precautions to keep their families safe. It is my hope everyone reading this newsletter will heed the warning and do likewise.

This newsletter edition is a “Red Flag Warning” about the epidemic levels of heroin and prescription drug abuse/addiction problems in our county. It is written as an ALERT to warn and educate everyone about the seriousness of the opiate drug problem. Epidemic means prevalent, widespread or affecting many individuals at the same time in a particular area. Opiate abuse/addiction has reached epidemic levels in Perry County.

This is a county problem that needs to be addressed by all including individuals, families, businesses, agencies and organizations, government, schools and churches. We can not keep our heads in the sand and pretend this problem doesn't exist. Please read this newsletter, discuss it with family and friends, pass it along, and if the problem exists for you as an individual or in your family please seek help.

*Glenn DeLuccio*

**“A definition of insanity I've read is, doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. That's what I did for years.”** Zach Whipperman, age 22.

(For more on the results of Zach's recovery read his interview on page 3)



## **THE DEVASTATING HIT OF HEROIN**

The State Attorney General's Office says Pennsylvania has an average of 40,000 heroin users - the third highest number of users, behind California and Illinois. Office of Attorney General Inspector, Craig LeCadre, said at a recent drug update training, “It's all about the pills and the heroin now.” PHS has seen evidence of this with an increase in clients reporting opiate use. Heroin's one hit and hooked potential, quickly spirals users into late stage addiction, feeling powerless while denying or protecting the problem. *Trust for America's Health* ranked Pennsylvania 14<sup>th</sup> highest for drug overdose deaths, most involving prescription drugs. Prescription pain medications appear to be on the rise, and with that we possibly overlook the biggest killer in our homes. Combined with heroin, opiates present a devastating hit to the community.

In this issue you will get an inside glimpse of the heroin and prescription drug epidemic that creeps into our small towns, infiltrates schools, and can erupt into catastrophe, even in our own living rooms. You will read the real life words of a former addict to both pills and heroin who has since found the desire to be clean more powerful than the pull to get high. We have listed partnering drug and alcohol treatment providers for those seeking help for detox and followup recovery. You will also find out what PHS is doing in the community to continue to offer hope, healing and freedom for families and individuals.

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**Heroin-** An opiate drug synthesized from morphine usually appearing as a white or brown powder that is sold in small wax bags and injected, smoked or snorted. Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs trainer, Bruce Schaffer, reports rates as low as six dollars a bag(1/10<sup>th</sup> gram) if bought in bundles of 10-14 in Philadelphia.

**Prescription Pain Pills-** Opiate based medication typically prescribed to treat pain. The strongest medications include OxyContin, Dilaudid, Fentanyl, and Opana. Other common opiates include Percocet and Vicodin.

**Suboxone and methadone** are used to treat opiate addiction.

**Medication Take Back Results from October 26:**

- Held at Newport State Police Barracks
- 54 participants
- 150 lbs of medications collected
- Visualize 150 lbs- six full trash bags.



**PA Dept of Health Statewide Drug & Alcohol Statistics**

Substance	1995	2000	2005	2010	Change
Alcohol	38,837	31,510	34,748	27,139	(30%)
Barbiturates	90	59	74	33	(64%)
Cocaine	18,412	12,045	16,501	7,089	(62%)
Heroin	7,383	10,646	21,491	14,717	199%
Marijuana	7,712	8,586	11,767	11,114	44%
Meth	215	155	410	168	(22%)
PCP	298	114	149	220	(27%)
Rx Opiates	558	1,201	5,125	7,503	1,344 %

\*Numbers represent clients entering treatment in PA. Graphic provided with permission by Inspector Craig LeCadre, OAG.

**PHS drug and alcohol counselors conduct close to 400 assessments each year. In the last six months 24% of clients reported use of opiates (pain pills or heroin).**

**Signs of heroin, opiate use/withdrawal:**

- ✓ Pinpoint pupils
- ✓ Muscle and bone pain
- ✓ Flu like symptoms
- ✓ Droopy/sleepy look
- ✓ Marks on arm
- ✓ Nose bleeds

**Observable actions of users:**

- ✓ Blowing through money
- ✓ Secretive
- ✓ Stealing items from home
- ✓ Mood swings
- ✓ Agitated
- ✓ Change in behavior

**Places to get help initially:**

**Gaudenzia (DETOX) Roxbury (DETOX)**

Harrisburg 238-5553      Shippensburg 1-800-648-4673

**Aftercare/Outpatient**

Perry Human Services Outpatient  
New Bloomfield 582-8703

Diakon Family Life Services      Gaudenzia Outpatient  
Mechanicsburg 795-0330      Mechanicsburg 766-8517

NHS Stevens Center      Roxbury Outpatient  
Carlisle 243-6033      Carlisle 249-5010

Cumberland Perry Drug Alcohol Commission  
Carlisle 240-6300

The RASE Project offers a speakers bureau available for behavioral health engagements, free, at the request of interested organizations. This speakers bank is comprised of persons in recovery from the five county region, who share their personal experience with addiction and recovery. Such storytelling does much to reduce stigma by educating, sharing personal accounts and achievements, and alleviating the fear and misunderstanding often surrounding the disease of addiction.

In My Own Words is sponsored in part by Partnership for Better Health and CABHC, and is available upon request to any organization in Perry, Cumberland, Lancaster, Lebanon or Dauphin Counties. Service organizations, civic clubs, corporations, churches, schools, or other professional and community groups will benefit from this type of informative presentation. For more information or to schedule a speaker, contact Kristin Noecker at (717) 249-6499 or email [kristinnoecker@raseproject.org](mailto:kristinnoecker@raseproject.org)

## CHANGING ONE THING: EVERYTHING.

### *Interview with Zach Whipperman from RASE Project on Heroin and Opiate Recovery*

**What in your story of use led to Heroin?** – I started smoking weed as a freshman in high school. By 10<sup>th</sup> grade I was smoking everyday. By 11<sup>th</sup> grade I would smoke before school, after school and smoke all night. My good friend had an older bro that was messing around with pain pills. I remember thinking, if my friends are wrapped around pain pills, it's got to be ok. By my senior year, pills became an everyday thing. Oxy and perk, they were just me and I was heavy into pain meds before graduating. Soon I needed pills everyday so I wouldn't get sick. Six to nine months after graduating, heroin was easily introduced to me and was so much cheaper for the same effect. I started bouncing back and forth between pills when I could get them, and heroin, and it slowly evolved into always doing heroin. I told myself I'd never do heroin. Then I rationalized, I told myself it was ok because I wasn't using a needle. Six to nine months later, I was doing heroin everyday.

**Why couldn't you just quit?** I didn't want to quit because I was so caught up in getting high. I thought I could control it even though I failed to control it for years. I had a physical dependency from doing pills and then heroin made it worse. What people don't understand is painkillers derive straight from heroin. You get the same effect except heroin is five times stronger. If you do heroin everyday and stop, you are going to be sick. Once you get over that you are still going to have post acute withdrawal for one to three months. I didn't want to deal with that. Rehab wasn't an option because I was protecting my addiction. Now looking at it, if someone needs to quit heroin, I say, "Go to rehab." I say, "It's easy to quit but harder to stay clean." You are addicted to the whole lifestyle and you have to change everything.

**What had to happen for you to get help?** I was in rehab for the second time. I got kicked out of a recovery house and I went back to jail. I had been out for two and a half months. The first night I was sitting there, and I said, "I'm done. I don't want to do this anymore." From age 17-20 I went backwards. I lost a good friend. I got charges for possession. I lost so much and I was done. I thought I could win and I'm not winning. You could call that my bottom. My mom didn't want me in her house. I lost my car, my girlfriend. I felt dead inside. I'm done I told myself. If I get out of jail I'm not getting high anymore.

**I'm 22, I have a year and a half clean. I talk to a lot of young people in recovery. You don't really see young people get clean. I didn't get clean until I wanted to get clean. I had the desire to stay clean more than the desire to use.**

**What should people do or not do to help an addict?** My mom called my parole officer and ratted me out. I thought at the time that was the worst thing in the world, but that might of saved my life. She would tell me not to come home because it was late, not to take her car. She told me she wasn't giving me money. That's the stuff that got me clean. That's just what you have to do. Cut someone off. Don't give him money. Don't buy his clothes. Don't pay for his cell phone bill. Don't give him a place to sleep. I had to reach the bottom where I felt dead inside. You reach that bottom quicker when you don't have people enabling you. Cut someone off so they get to their bottom quicker. People don't want to hear that.

**How have you been motivated to stay clean for a year and a half?** I didn't get this way over night. When I got clean I had to deal with all the bad stuff I did. I had to pay for all the stuff I did. It wasn't easy, but I didn't want to go back to what I was doing. I looked at myself and I was 20 and had nothing. I didn't want to go back to that. I was ready to grow. That was the gift of being clean. I got my life back. I was feeling so much better about myself and I was feeling normal again. That's the stuff that kept me going. I had the desire to stay clean more than the desire to use.

**What would you tell someone who is addicted?** Everyone can get clean. If it's bad enough, you'll get clean. Go to rehab and take suggestions from people who are clean. If you are not ready, you are not going to succeed. When I went to rehab, I had no desire to get clean, but when I went to rehab it planted the seed to realize what recovery was all about. It [*my addiction*] wasn't really attractive to me anymore. I knew there was a better way to live. The old timers in NA have this saying, "*You only have to change one thing- everything!*" It's kind of true. You might need to change your group of friends. You might need to move, change your job, change everything about your life, but in the end you will take yourself with you. I started completely over.

UPCOMING EVENTS WITH PERRY HUMAN SERVICES...

# Take a Swing at Drug Abuse

## Miniature Golf Tournament

**Saturday May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014**

Rain date: May 4<sup>th</sup>.

11:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30

### Paradise Stream Family Campground

Loysville, Pa

**Build a team and play together as a family, neighbors or coworkers!**

### 18 holes of mini-golf

### free tee shirt

Entrance Fee: \$25- additional pledges encouraged

Registration and sponsor packets available at [perryhumanservices.org](http://perryhumanservices.org)

*For more information, call PHS at 582-8703*

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## PARENT/FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

*For those affected by their child's  
or family member's drug/alcohol use*

### **Here's what people are saying...**

*"It's the best thing you can do for yourself."*

*"I learned I was not alone. It was not just me."*

*"The group gives me emotional support."*



## Support GROUP

**When:** 2nd Monday of each month from 7:00—8:30 p.m

**Location:** PERRY HUMAN SERVICES Mulhollem Office Centre, New Bloomfield

Check [www.perryhumanservices.org](http://www.perryhumanservices.org) for more information