

D&A News

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“A Whole New Life” Through Treatment

Jordan and Adrianna* have a lot in common with other girls. They are both middle school students in Lancaster. Both enjoy computer games, like Guitar Hero. But they also share a unique experience that most other girls their age have not had. When they were nine years old, both of them moved with their mothers into Gaudenzia’s Vantage House, an addictions treatment center for women and their children in Lancaster.

Jordan shares that life before Vantage was “very, very terrible.” “I spent a lot of time alone or at my dad’s house while my mom was out all the time.”

Adrianna had a similar story. “My mom went to another rehab once when I was little. She was gone for a month and I had to go to a respite home. I cried a lot. I missed her so much.”

At Vantage, both girls were able to stay with their mothers while they received treatment. Adrianna was able to stay in her school, but Jordan had to attend a new school, since she had previously lived in another school district. “It was scary going to a new school. I remember I was very shaky the first day,” she says.

Both girls remember the early adjustments they made. Although Jordan can laugh about it now, she remembers the difficulties she sometimes had with the other



children there. “I wanted to sleep with my mom at first,” she relates. “I was in a room with another girl who was so bad. She put chapstick on the walls and used it to glue her posters up.”

Adrianna says she was one of the only older children there during her stay and that she was lonely at times. “But there were babies there and I got to hold them and help with them. I was roommates with a little two year old girl for awhile who cried. I had to set an example for her and that helped me to be brave.”

Both girls have good memories of fun times at Vantage, such as going to Hersheypark, birthday parties, and playing outside with a hose on a hot day. They also learned things through the groups and activities that they participated in. “If you don’t want to end up here, don’t drink, don’t do drugs, and stay in school,” says Adrianna. “Drinking at an early age or having other problems gets you in trouble,” adds Jordan.

After Vantage, both girls participated in Gaudenzia’s continuum of care with their mothers and attended an outpatient program at the Elsie Shenk Center, adjacent to Vantage. Jordan says that life since Vantage has been “so awesome.” “I have a whole new life.”

Adrianna shares, “You see the sun shining. It’s like being born again. You have your life handed back to you.” For other kids who may be facing similar problems in their family, she says, “Stay strong. It’s better that they get help. You have to remember, it’s not easy for the adults. I love my mom everyday.”

The Lancaster County D&A Commission provides preferential treatment services to pregnant women. Contact us at (717) 299-8023 to learn about treatment options for women. To learn more about Gaudenzia’s recovery programs, you can also visit www.gaudenzia.org.

**Note: The children’s names in this article have been changed.*

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rough Times Behind and Ahead Of Us

The recent budget cuts are nothing new to the D&A field. As the graphs indicate on the opposite page, the D&A Commission and the entire substance abuse field have been experiencing a meltdown in our publicly funded allocations for the past seven years. It is a trend that will not get better in today's economy, as we witness the private sector experiencing the same budget shortfalls. And as the national economy contracts, and more people are unemployed, the need for services such as D&A treatment increases. Unfortunately, many citizens will not be able to receive a helping hand from the D&A Commission as the graph and funding continues to fall.

The two primary public funding streams for the D&A Commission are the Department of Health (DOH), which provides both state and federal dollars, and the Department of Public Welfare (DPW), which provides state tax dollars for treatment. Compared to many other publicly-funded human service fields, the total allocation is small, at just over three and a half million dollars. My office uses about two million dollars to purchase treatment for the working poor, and one million is used in the schools and community for prevention/education programs. Not only did we not receive a cost of living increase over the past seven years to keep up with the negative affects of inflation, but we actually received a decrease in funding in most years. And since the D&A Commission serves people who are low income, and essentially the working poor, these people are caught in the middle of having just enough income to not qualify for public assistance to treat their addiction.

The D&A Commission is trying to keep detox and outpatient services open. Detox because the client is in a medical crisis, and outpatient services because it is relatively inexpensive. We have suspended placements into residential rehab and halfway house programs, since the money is not there to admit new clients. These are becoming desperate times, and we are taking drastic measures to keep some services available. My staff is also concentrating on getting clients onto Medicaid, or Medical Assistance, since MA will pay for D&A treatment.

Before the national budget meltdown occurred, the D&A field was already experiencing a budget crisis of its own. Now, we can only scale back our services, find ways to cut down on overhead cost, and hope for a better day ahead.



D&A NEWS

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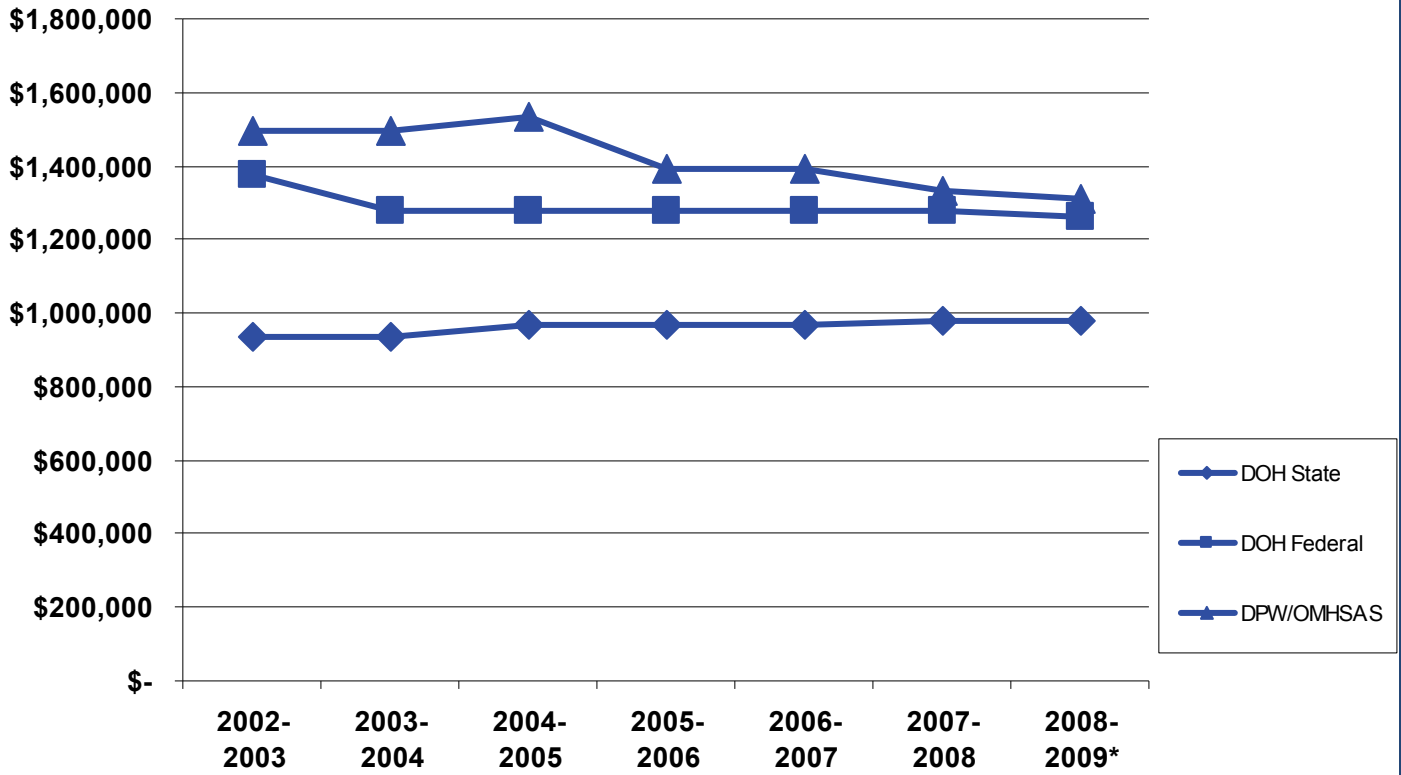
Commissioner Dennis Stuckey

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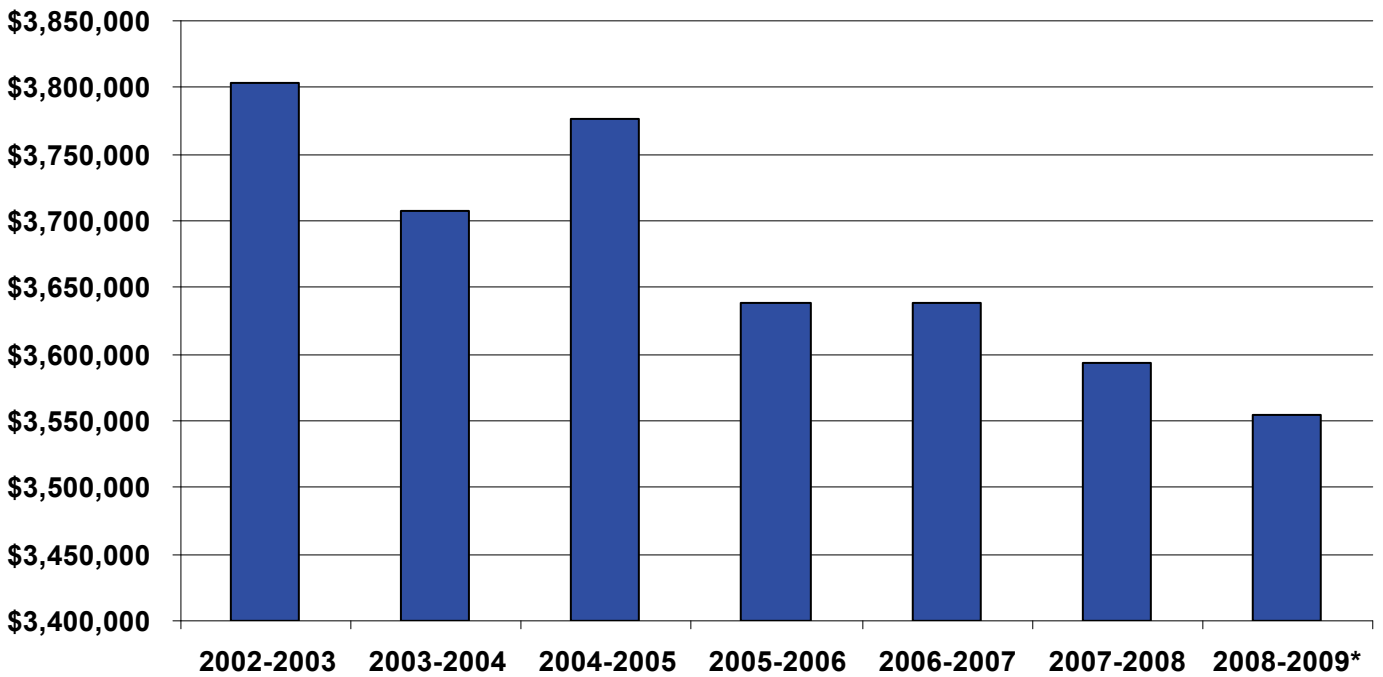
Lisa Starr

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Lancaster County Drug and Alcohol Commission Seven Year Budget Review



Total DOH/DPW Allocation



Retiring Board Members Honored



Lisa Koogle



Ina Elliot

The Single County Authority (SCA), the advisory board of the Lancaster County D&A Commission honored two of its long term volunteers on November 17. Ina Elliot and Lisa Koogle both retired after six years of service to the SCA.

Upon being presented a plaque, Ina Elliot responded with thanks of her own. "I am reminded of Rick, the staff, and members of the board and the hard work and dedication you have to do a difficult job. I appreciate what the Drug and Alcohol Commission does, and wonder that in the face of the frustrations of treatment and funding that you can stay so positive and accomplish so much. I became aware of this through the meetings. The knowledge and dedication shown at the facilities was also impressive. Your work is truly a gift to so many. As a family member, I can attest to the opportunity for change in family relationships when substance abuse is arrested. I am grateful that I had the experience of being on the board."

Lisa Koogle served as chairperson of the SCA. She found the experience to be both educational and humbling. Lisa shared, "There were many things to be learned by serving on the D&A Commission board, not least of which were increased gratitude and humility. As I learned more over the years about addiction – the triumphs as well as the tragedies – I was grateful to be free of those challenges in my own life and humbled, both by the people who do conquer their addiction and the many under-paid, unappreciated professionals who serve them each day."

The Lancaster County Drug and Alcohol Commission is thankful for the dedicated service of all its advisory board members. The SCA is looking for additional volunteers to serve (see accompanying article ***We Need Your Input***). Contact Marcia Musser at (717) 299-8023 if you are interested.

We Need Your Input!

The Single County Authority Planning Commission (SCA), the advisory board of the Lancaster County Drug and Alcohol Commission has several vacancies this year. Rick Kastner, Executive Director, is looking for a few good men and women to fill them. "We hope to have a list of names to submit to the County Commissioners," says Rick. "The Commissioners actually appoint the members to serve. We provide a list of possible volunteers to them. They are looking for a variety of citizens from across the county – a mix of people and locations."

Board members must be Lancaster County residents and may not be employees or contracted staff of any facility that contracts with the Drug and Alcohol Commission. Here are a few frequently asked questions about serving on the SCA board:

What kind of time commitment are you looking for?

It is a limited time commitment of seven meetings per year. Meetings occur on Monday nights and last for an hour and a half. If a member can make at least half of these meetings, there are enough persons for a quorum. No subcommittee meetings or other outside meetings are required.

Do I need any special background, education, or qualifications?

No. All training and orientation is provided at the meetings themselves. We look for a variety of people of different ages and backgrounds to provide common sense feedback and input into our programs and policies. In the past, our board members have included homemakers, industrial workers, teachers, clergy, police officers, retired persons, and even high school and college students.

Will I have to do any kind of fundraising or solicitation?

No.

Where and when do meetings occur?

Meetings are held at 6:00 PM at 150 N. Queen St. in Lancaster. Parking is paid for and a light meal is provided. On occasion, the board may meet at a local treatment facility to take a tour and meet the staff. The meetings for 2009 are: Jan. 26, Mar. 23, Apr. 27, May 18, Jul. 27, Sept. 28, and Nov. 23.

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We Need Your Input!

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How long would I serve?

Board members serve a three year term and may serve up to two terms (6 years). If a member's job, health, or family responsibilities were to change and prevent the member from completing the whole term, he or she would simply resign and a new volunteer would be appointed to fill the vacancy.

I'm interested! Where can I get more information and an application?

Call us at (717) 299-8023 or email Marcia Musser at mmusser@co.lancaster.pa.us.

SPFSIG: Here's What's Happening!

Last summer we were proud to announce that Lancaster County had been awarded a Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPFSIG). This funding is focused on underage drinking and the grant specifically targets the Elizabethtown community. There has been a lot of behind the scenes planning with the Elizabethtown Area Communities That Care and many more activities will be unveiled in the coming months, but a lot has already been accomplished. Here's a sample:

- 👉 Big Brothers Big Sisters has been expanded into the middle school.
- 👉 COBYS Family Services has completed the first Strengthening Families Program sessions with a turnout of 58 people, which includes parents and their children.
- 👉 The DUI Council of Lancaster County, along with other community partners, is gearing up for the Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) training.

New Intensive Case Manager Joins D&A Commission

Matt Barnett joined the D&A Commission as Intensive Case Manager on November 10, 2008. The position was created in 1997 to better assist clients in connecting with resources that assist them in recovery, such as housing, job training, transportation, and health care.



Matt Barnett

Matt is a 2008 graduate of Lock Haven University. While in school, he worked in Harrisburg for the Department of Labor and Industry in the legislative affairs office. He relates, "The time I spent at Labor & Industry gave me a better understanding and appreciation for how a bureaucracy works. In addition, during the internship I learned about certain resources, which can be helpful to some of my clients here at the D&A Commission."

Matt shared that he became interested in the addictions field for several reasons and offered these two. "First of all, throughout my life I have known people, personally, who have struggled with drug and alcohol addictions. Secondly, I always wanted to hold a professional position where I could be engaged in helping people in some way. Therefore, not only does being an Intensive Case Manager provide me with the opportunity to help people, but it also allows me to help people similar to those I knew personally in my life who struggled with addictions, and I find that to be very rewarding."

Outside of work, Matt enjoys following politics, listening to Pink Floyd, watching the Ultimate Fighting Championship, and fitness. He is currently engaged to his high school sweetheart and in the midst of wedding planning.

Name Change for Prevention Service Provider

One of the D&A Commission's largest prevention contractors has changed its name. The agency formerly known as the Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse is now known as Compass Mark.

"The idea behind the Compass Mark name is to let people know that we're ready to meet them wherever they are, and guide them to wherever they want to be," says Dave Bender, Executive Director. "This new name focuses on positive directions and our long history of leading the way to healthier and more fulfilling lives."

Compass Mark provides many services to children, families, and the community, including the Elementary Youth Support Program (EYSP), the Skills for Life Program, and the Lancaster Drug and Alcohol Information Center. Visit www.compassmark.org.

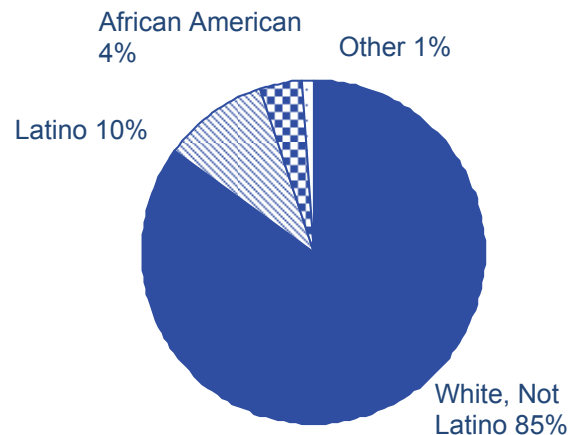
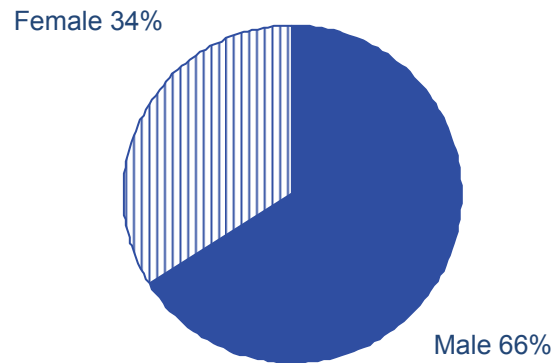
RASE Buprenorphine Project Reports Promising Outcomes

Denise Holden and Dona Dmitrovic of the RASE Project reported excellent client outcomes for the Buprenorphine Coordinator Program at the annual SCA board banquet on November 17, 2008. The RASE Buprenorphine Coordinator Project is now entering its third year of service to persons recovering from opioid addiction. A majority of the buprenorphine clients are from Lancaster in this five county Health Choices reinvestment project.

The RASE Program is an innovative approach designed to assist individuals who are being prescribed buprenorphine/Suboxone in their recovery from heroin or other opioid drug addiction. It incorporates client monitoring, referral, counseling, support groups and mentoring to provide the most comprehensive service provision possible. While a physician can prescribe the drug to recovering persons, patients also need someone to help them with referral to appropriate outpatient drug counseling and other necessary services, such as housing, education, and employment assistance. Coordinators assist recovering persons in finding the services they need, thus freeing up physicians' time to see more patients. Two coordinators are located in the Lancaster County D&A Commission offices.

There are currently 22 physicians in Lancaster County who are certified to prescribe buprenorphine. In the first year of the program 105 clients were served by two Lancaster County coordinators. Sixty six percent of those served were male and 34% were female. Clients ranged in age from 19 to 67, with the average age being 33. About 85% were Caucasian, 10% Latino, 4% African American, and 1% other.

RASE Buprenorphine Project Client Demographics



Program Outcomes for 2007-2008

- 64% of clients were employed, 34% unemployed and 2% were on disability.
- 96% were in stable housing.
- 99% had no criminal activity.
- 90% were abstinent from opiate use.
- 90% were abstinent from all drugs.
- 70% were currently in counseling.
- 49% were active in support groups.
- 95% reported improved family relations.
- The program has a 77% retention rate.

**Change of Address?
Receiving multiple copies of our
newsletter?**

**Help us update our mailing list by calling
(717) 299-8023. Please have your mailing
label ready so that we may better assist you.
Or email your change to
Istarr@co.lancaster.pa.us**

Lancaster County Drug and Alcohol Commission

150 N. Queen St.

Lancaster, PA 17603

(717) 299-8023

Fact Sheet: Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse by Properly Disposing of Unused Medications

Prescription drugs like Oxycontin and Fentanyl have provided relief to many people suffering from severe pain. Ritalin and Adderall have helped thousands of children with ADHD function better in school. But these and other drugs pose a threat to others when unused quantities are present in the home or are disposed of improperly. Leftover prescription drugs:

- ◆ Can be abused by teenagers or adults who take them to get high.
- ◆ Can be accidentally swallowed by curious children or pets, resulting in poisoning.
- ◆ May harm the environment by causing contamination in landfills and water systems.

To reduce the risk of these dangers, Lancaster County Waste Management advises following the recommendations of the Office of National Drug Control Policy on disposing of unused medicines.

- ◆ **Always follow the advice of your doctor and pharmacist. Take prescription medicines exactly according to instructions. Do not share your prescribed medicines, even with family members. Then dispose of unused quantities immediately.**
- ◆ **Take unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers.**
- ◆ **Mix prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, like used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and put them in impermeable, nondescript containers, such as empty cans with secure lids or sealable bags, to further ensure the drugs are not used or accidentally ingested by children and pets.**
- ◆ **Throw the repackaged drugs in the trash.**
- ◆ **Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet unless the label or information specifically says to do so.**
- ◆ **Always dispose of used injection needles and other “sharps” in the proper manner in order to protect your trash hauler and prevent drug abuse. Use the special containers provided free by Waste Management or your pharmacist and follow their instructions for disposal.**

More information on this topic can be obtained from your pharmacist or from SMAR_XT DISPOSAL, a public-private partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the American Pharmacists Association, and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. Visit www.smarxtdisposal.net.



LANCASTER COUNTY
DRUG AND ALCOHOL COMMISSION
150 N. QUEEN ST.
LANCASTER, PA 17603

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

We've moved again!

We are back in our permanent office space, following a brief move to allow completion of a construction project. We are located at 150 N. Queen St., Lancaster, on the fourth floor.

For the most updated and comprehensive list of local D&A trainings and events, please visit www.compassmark.org.

Don't forget to check out the interactive calendar! It helps you search for the workshops and events that interest you!

Single County Authority (SCA) Meetings

Meetings will be held March 23, April 27, May 18, July 27, September 28, and November 23, 2009. All meetings will be at 6:00 PM at 150 N. Queen St., Lancaster.

For more information about events, contact the D&A Commission at (717) 299-8023.

The D&A Commission will be closed for the following County holidays:

April 10, May 25, July 3, and September 7, 2009.

Prevention Forum

Wednesday, Apr. 29

Lancaster Host Conference Center

8:30-3:30

Workshops include: Teen Prescription Drug Abuse, Mass Media and Children, Student Success, and Parent-Based Interventions to Prevent Underage Drinking

Hosted by Compassmark

Register online at www.compassmark.org or call (717) 299-2831

\$25/\$40 late registration (lunch included)

For emergency and weather-related closings and delays of Lancaster County offices, please tune in to local radio stations or watch WGAL-TV8. Emergency closings are also announced on the Lancaster County website at www.co.lancaster.pa.us.