



# Berks Opioid Coalition

# What is SOS Berks?



SOS Berks is a coalition of Berks County stakeholders invested in providing our community with support, resources, and education to raise awareness, stop the stigma, and end opioid deaths in our community.

Community  
Safety  
Committee



The **Community Safety Committee** will focus their efforts to enhance community safety regarding Substance Use Disorder, Opioid Use Disorder, and overdose.



### Tasked with:

- Appraising areas where new education or awareness campaigns may be needed.
- Providing guidance regarding the supply and distribution of Naloxone in the county

### Key Priorities:

- Naloxone education and distribution
- Medication disposal bags, and education and distribution of medication disposal bags.
- Medication and prescription take back programs

### Committee Members:

- Law Enforcement
- Criminal Justice
- First Responders
- Other agencies or organizations that have direct contact with individuals with high risk for overdose and /or OUD.



## The Safety Committee provides support for:

- Medication Take Back Days
- Stigma Reduction Videos
- Health Fairs
- Articles for *The Response*



# Health To Go Vending Machine



**Health To Go** is a community-based vending machine designed to dispense health items for free.

SOS Berks has partnered with Penn State College of Medicine to bring a new Health To Go vending machine to Berks County.





# Community Outreach

- Passive Outreach
- Helping Harvest (multiple locations)

## Resources Distributed:

- Narcan
- Medication Lock Boxes
- Medication Disposal Bags
- Brochures



# Healthcare & Treatment Committee





The **Healthcare and Treatment Committee** will incorporate efforts that touch both the healthcare and treatment/recovery sectors of Berks County.



### Tasked With:

- Assessing current healthcare and treatment programs.
- Evaluating gaps in Intervention Treatment & Recovery services in Berks County.
- Assisting in expanding access to treatment and recovery support options for high-risk populations
- Help in the expansion of Warm Hand Off programs.

### Key Priorities:

- Increasing
  - Recovery Support
  - Medication Assisted Treatment
- Expanding Warm Hand Off



# Accomplishments

- Expanded Warm Hand Off (WHO) program to 24/7 at Tower Health and on-call at Penn State/St. Joe's Tower Health. Hoping to re-establish WHO program at St. Joe's/Penn State.
- Made Narcan kits available at Reading/Tower Health emergency department.
- Created No Wrong Door policy with contracted SUD providers committing to help getting clients placed, even if not within their facility.
- Expanded Medication-Assisted Treatment options.
- Created Narcan kits distribution process for Berks County Jail inmates at release.



# Future Goals



- To restart outreach to Reading downtown and high customer foot traffic businesses to ask about displaying information on treatment resources.
- After receiving data indicating that African Americans in Berks County have died from overdoses at a much greater rate than other populations, we contacted every church serving predominately African Americans with a request to present to their congregations. To date, none have responded positively.
- We are looking for current church members that might be able to help us meet with their church's leadership.



# Prevention & Education Committee



The **Prevention and Education Committee** will focus on coordinating and performing SUD/ODD specific prevention and education opportunities in the county.



### Tasked With:

- Identifying target populations for prevention and education programs.
- Developing and implementing new prevention programs for high-risk populations and target populations

### Key Priorities:

- Substance use and opioid use prevention and education programming.



# Accomplishments

- Community education and Narcan trainings for
  - Business leaders
  - First Responders
  - Pharmacists (virtual and in person)
- Medication Drop Box card distributed.



Narcan distribution at high OD locations (data driven)



Medication Take Back events with Berks Medical Society



Distribution of SOS Berks packets





# Outreach at Events

## Reading Pride Festival



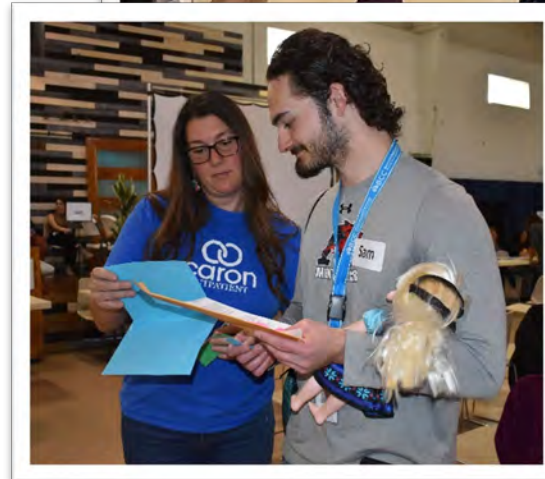
## Oley Fair



# Recovery Simulation Event

## About the Recovery Simulation

- First event held in April 2023 at Easy Does It Inc, in Bern Township
- Involved 40 participants from human service agencies, colleges, law enforcement and the community.
- An interactive event designed to reduce stigma
- A 2<sup>nd</sup> simulation is planned for December.



# Editorial Board





# SOS Berks Response Editorial Board

- The SOS Berks *Response* Editorial Board was established in 2017 to address Goal 2 of the Coalition Strategic Plan:

“Ensure that all residents of Berks County are well-informed on overdose, signs of a Substance/Opioid Use Disorder, treatment options, and recovery programs available throughout the community.”



Through a partnership with Hoffman Publishing and seed funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime And Delinquency (PCCD), the Response magazine was created.

- Response offers timely articles on:
  - Opioid and other substance
  - Stigma
  - Available resources
  - And much more



# Accomplishments

- Since Winter 2018, ten issues of the Response have been published, with a print circulation of 3,500+ and 4,500+ online impressions per issue.
- An online version of the Response is available concurrently with the print edition. The online version allows for the downloading of both the entire issue as well as individual articles.
- Partnerships are key to the success of the Response. Articles have been reprinted in other publications including the Berks County Medical Society's magazine, Medical Record.
- An emerging partnership with Palo magazine will ensure that vital information reaches Berks County's Spanish-speaking population.



# SOS Berks Response

- The Response circulation includes:

- Schools
- Churches
- Libraries
- Physicians & Dentist Offices
- Barbershops & Beauty Salons
- Social Service Agencies
- Individual Homes

- Highlights of Response themes include:

- Addiction Doesn't Define Me
- Surviving Trauma
- Substance Use Lives in Every Neighborhood
- The Gifts of Recovery
- Faces of Hope





# Data Collection & Assessment Committee



The **Data Collection and Assessment Committee** will focus on collecting and analyzing data pieces from various entities in Berks County.



### Tasked With:

- Identifying and mapping data sources that articulate the scope of the overdose and the SUD/ODU problem.
- Establishing a sustainable data collection process to ensure the coalition is receiving current information from partnering entities.
- Facilitating data sharing between various stakeholders to ensure confidentiality, integrity and regulatory compliance.
- Working with other committees to analyze, present and distribute data.

### Key Priorities:

To assist other subcommittees on current initiatives and future actions by presenting information and analysis.



# Accomplishments

- Response Magazine Infographics
- Data Analysis
  - 911
  - Treatment (HealthChoices)
  - Coroner (identifying disparity in fatality demographics)
  - Tower Health Naloxone Distribution
- Spatial analysis of opioid related deaths and overdose 911 calls.
- Ad hoc reports and information requests
- Facilitate discussions about the use of data and ability to access data.
- Data has guided outreach efforts



# Community Awareness Committee



The **Community Awareness and Outreach Committee** will focus on increasing overall community awareness about the overdose epidemic and coalition efforts throughout Berks County.



### Tasked With:

- Developing a marketing strategy to promote coalition activities and achievements.
- Creating and implementing strategies to increase community awareness on:
  - Addiction
  - Overdose
  - Stigma
  - Prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery resources in Berks County

### Key Priorities:

- Increasing community awareness and education regarding addiction, prevention, treatment and recovery.
- Manage marketing and information dissemination efforts of the coalition.



# Promoting & Marketing SOS Berks

- Created informational postcards, posters, flyers and promotional materials.
- Maintain a social media presence on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter)
- Created an SOS Berks website, [sosberks.org](http://sosberks.org), in 2019 and updated it in 2022.



Follow us: @sosberks





# Accomplishments

- Assist with Drug Take Back Days, articles for Response, and community outreach events.
- Assist other committees as needed, including the Safety Committee's vending machine project
- Advertise in local publications

Do your part to curb the opioid crisis.  
**Properly store and dispose of medications**  
*In Berks County these free resources make medication safety easy.*

Free Lock Boxes      30+ Drop Box Locations      Free Disposal Bags



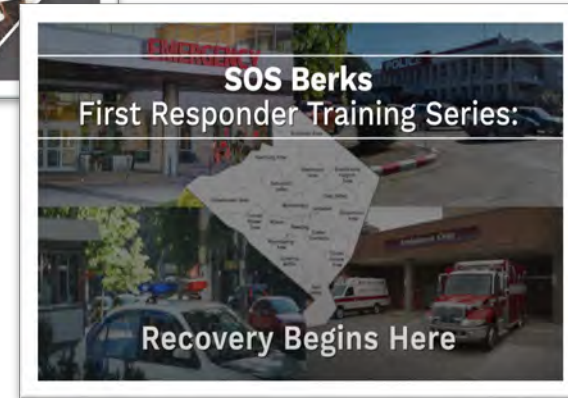
To order lock boxes or disposal bags, or to find a medication drop box location near you, scan the QR code or visit [sosberks.org](https://sosberks.org)



# Stigma Reduction Campaign

## Addiction Doesn't Define Me

- Launched in 2019
- Featured video testimonials from Berks County individuals in long-term recovery and family members who had lost loved ones to an overdose.
- Managed by MADJ Marketing
- Included brochures and ads
- Additional videos were made in 2021 & 2022, including a series for first responders





# Mural Project

## SOS Berks Mural Project

- Builds on Addiction Doesn't Define Me theme, depicting the stories of people in recovery from substance use disorder.
- The first mural at 9th & Oley Sts in Reading, was completed in August. It consisted of 60 panels painted off-site by an estimated 1,000 community members.
- A second mural is currently being painted at 11th & Richmond Sts in Reading.
- Our hope is to install a series of murals in Berks County.











SOS



Berks

Stop Overdoses... Save Lives