



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wolf Administration Addresses Growing Trend of Stimulant Use in the State

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Agency’s Liberty Mid-Atlantic High Intensity Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program, hosted more than 300 at the Best Western Premier in Harrisburg to address the rising trend of stimulant usage across the commonwealth.

“One of the biggest takeaways from combatting the opioid epidemic is that to make effective change in our communities it takes partnerships and dedication from the national, state, and local level,” said DDAP Secretary Jen Smith. “Today’s symposium is the beginning of partnerships to prevent a stimulant epidemic from permeating the lives of Pennsylvanians like the opioid crisis has. Together, we can ensure our drug and alcohol prevention and treatment programs are equipped to provide high-quality services to Pennsylvanians in need.”

The no-cost, one-day symposium brought together members of law enforcement, criminal justice professionals, health care providers, emergency personnel, drug and alcohol providers, and stakeholders. Attendees heard from national partnerships and leading experts in the drug and alcohol field on topics such as public safety, using data to forecast trends, intervention and treatment, and prevention and education.

“The effects of drugs in the stimulant class create new complexities for public safety, public health, and substance use and prevention for professionals like law enforcement, emergency medical personnel and treatment providers,” said Liberty Mid-Atlantic HIDTA Executive Director Jeremiah A. Daley. “By partnering with DDAP to present this symposium, we aim to raise awareness among the many disciplines that can thwart the proliferation of these drugs, those who treat persons who are acutely or chronically impacted by them, and those who can educate others in their fields and their communities about the dangers they present.”

Pennsylvania's focused efforts to battle the opioid epidemic led to the realization that trends have emerged related to the supply and use of prescription and illicit psychostimulants. There are many differences between opioid use disorder and methamphetamine and cocaine use disorder, requiring knowledge of various methods of treatment and properly supporting overdose victims.

Individuals presenting with stimulant use disorder are often more medically compromised than individuals with OUD and are often wrongfully diagnosed as having a mental illness as opposed to substance use disorder. Effective treatments for stimulant usage are primarily residential behavioral therapies as there are currently no evidence-based medications to treat stimulants.

"Our primary concern is the health and safety of Pennsylvanians," said Smith. "We must be proactive in addressing these trends and work together to ensure individuals are receiving the appropriate services to treat their individual needs. This means educating first responders and law enforcement as to what they can expect when they are called to the scene, ensuring treatment providers and health care professionals can provide necessary care, and educating community stakeholders on proven prevention efforts. Together, we must all do our part."

Individuals seeking recovery resources for themselves or a loved one can call the toll-free PA Get Help Now helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). A live chat option is also available online or via text message at 717-216-0905 for those seeking help who may not be comfortable speaking to a helpline operator.

For more information about Pennsylvania's Psychostimulant Symposium, visit ddap.pa.gov.

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