



PrEvention News

The United States is currently working to minimize spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 virus. Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) are programs providing essential medication to individuals with opioid use disorders (OUD). Many attending OTPs for treatment of OUD present at the OTP daily to receive medication for their OUD. In circumstances in which a patient(s) have symptoms of infection (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath) or in which they may have been in contact with someone who has such symptoms or has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 infection; it is important that the individual(s) not attend the OTP, but as importantly, that they continue to receive their medication to treat their OUD.

MAT Changing Due to COVID-19



On March 16, 2020 the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provided additional guidance to Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) in recognition of the evolving issues surrounding COVID-19 and the emerging needs facing OTPs. The increased flexibility allowed for the State Opioid Treatment Authority to request blanket exceptions regarding take-home medications on behalf of OTPs within the State.

SAMHSA will allow take-home doses of up to 28 days for patients who are stable and up to 14 days for patients who are less stable but whom the OTP believes can safely handle that level of take-home medication. DDAP has submitted the required information to SAMHSA to request a blanket exception. OTPs must follow the protocols they have developed to implement the extended take-home procedures. On March 6, 2020, pursuant to the provisions of section 7301(c) of the Emergency Management Services Code, 35 Pa. C.S. §§ 7101, et seq., Governor Tom Wolf issued a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency related to the novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Pursuant to authorization from the Governor in accordance with the proclamation, and consistent with the SAMHSA guidance, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) is suspending the regulation at 28 Pa. Code §715.16(e), which prohibits Narcotic Treatment Programs (NTPs) from allowing a patient to receive more than a 2-week take-home supply of medication, for the duration of the disaster emergency. The current disaster emergency constitutes an exceptional circumstance pursuant to 28 Pa. Code § 715.16(d)(3) for all patients who are stable and responsible to receive take-home privileges. 28 Pa. Code § 715.16(e) With an exception granted under subsection 715.16(d), a narcotic treatment program may not permit a patient to receive more than a 2-week take-home supply of medication. This regulation is being suspended for the duration of the disaster emergency. Consistent with the guidance from SAMHSA, while the Governor's emergency declaration remains in place,

NTPs have been granted a blanket exception for all patients who are stable to receive 28-days of take-home doses of the patient's medication for opioid use disorder. The same blanket exception also allows NTPs to provide up to 14 days of take-home medication for those patients who are less stable but whom the NTP believes can safely handle this level of take-home medication. The NTP may give take-home medications only to patients whom the narcotic treatment physician has determined are responsible and able to handle narcotic drugs outside the narcotic treatment program. The narcotic treatment physician shall make this determination after consultation with staff involved in the patient's care. The considerations to determine whether take-home medications are appropriate for a particular patient are listed in both federal regulations, 42 C.F.R. § 8.12(i)(2), and state regulations, 28 Pa. Code § 715.16(b).

All other regulations, unless also specifically suspended or waived by the emergency declaration, remain in effect. Please remember take-home medication is not allowed during a 30-day narcotic detoxification treatment. A narcotic treatment program shall observe the patient ingesting the medication 7 days per week. See 28 Pa. Code § 715.24(4)(i). A provider implementing this suspension does not need to submit a waiver request. It must, however, update its policies to reflect these changes and provide them to DDAP. A provider may begin implementing this suspension upon submission of the updated policies to DDAP and is not required to wait for a formal response. DDAP will advise providers of the expiration of this suspension by issuing an Informational Bulletin. Questions regarding this Licensing Alert can be sent to the Division of Drug and Alcohol Program Licensing at (717)783-8675 or RA-licensuredivision@pa.gov.

Help PrEvent the Spread

Germ Farm



Scrub'em!

Can too much “screen time” change the brain

Information courtesy of National Institute on Drug Abuse

Have you ever wondered if all that smartphone scrolling, snapping, and texting affects your brain? Scientists do, and they’re looking to find out if “screen time”—time spent looking at smartphone, computer, and television screens—changes the developing brain.

Past research has shown differences in the brains of young adults who spend a lot of time playing video games, compared with those who don’t. Scientists want to learn more about how screen time affects the younger brains of children and teens.

Brain scans from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study showed a difference in the brains of some 9- and 10-year-olds who use smartphones, tablets, and video games more than 7 hours a day compared to those who engaged in less screen time.

Eventually, researchers hope to find out if and how screen time is connected to changes in the developing brain.

Screen time is just one of the things scientists are exploring with the ABCD Study. They’ll compare baseline (initial) data with what they learn over the next 10 years from nearly 12,000 young participants. The results will reveal a lot about

how the brain develops, including biological and environmental factors that might affect it. For example:

How does playing team sports relate to mental health?

Is there an association between nutrition and brain development?

Are peer influences linked to risky behaviors?

Participants return every year for follow-up visits, so scientists can see how their brains change over time.

So, can too much screen time change your brain? Maybe. This single snapshot can’t give us the full picture. Stay tuned to this blog for more updates as they become available.

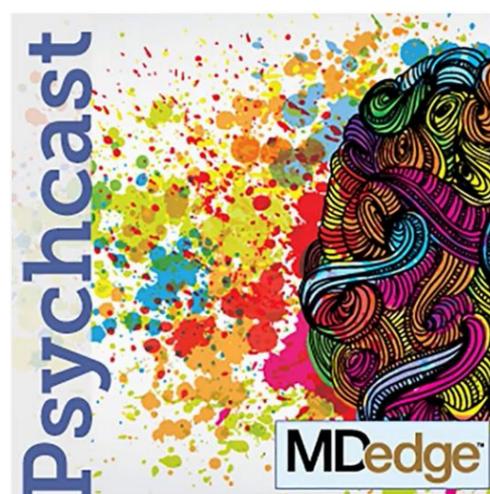
Article and Information Courtesy of National Institute on Drug Abuse



Psychcast: Mitigate the impact of COVID-19

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= EC3yPf2jAg>

Podcast Courtesy of MDEdge



CSAY

COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND YOUTH

GAMBLING TELEHEALTH

On March 6, 2020, pursuant to the provisions of Subsection 7301(c) of the Emergency Management Services Code, 35 Pa. C.S. § 7101, et seq., Governor Tom Wolf issued a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency related to the novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

During the term of this Disaster Emergency, providers who have a grant agreement with the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to provide outpatient problem gambling services may use grant funds to provide assessments and outpatient counseling for clients using telehealth technology.

Counselors who have grant agreements are able to provide telehealth using real-time, two-way interactive audio-video transmission services in the office setting. While the two-way interactive transmission is the preferred method, services provided by telephone and in the home are also acceptable. All federal and state privacy and confidentiality requirements applicable to in person services remain applicable to services provided through telehealth technology.

Questions regarding this Information Bulletin can be sent to Amy Hubbard, Treatment Division at amhubbard@pa.gov



Community Stigma Survey

The Mon Valley Opioid Coalition would like to hear your thoughts on substance use in our community, please take a moment and complete our survey.



Uniting the Mon Valley to ensure the long-term health, safety, and well-being of individuals in the region.

For more information visit our website: <https://www.overdosefreepa.pitt.edu/mon-valley/>
Survey Link: <https://tinyurl.com/MVstigma>

For iPhones, open the camera app on your phone and it will connect you to an online survey. For Androids, please scan in the QR reader app.

Disaster Distress Helpline

Information Courtesy of SAMHSA.gov

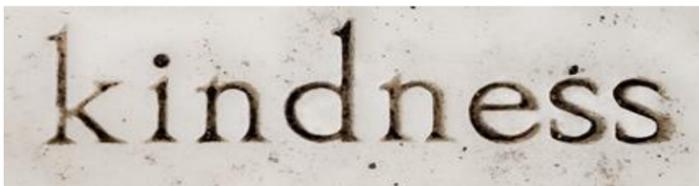
SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster.

The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year

This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

The Disaster Distress Helpline puts people in need of counseling on the path to recovery. Our staff members provide counseling and support before, during, and after disasters and refer people to local disaster-related resources for follow-up care and support. Since its launch in February 2012, the Disaster Distress Helpline has provided counseling and support in response to disasters such as Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon bombing, and the Ebola outbreak.



Click the link below to watch an inspirational video of an overdose survivor thanking the first responders that saved him.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGXX73IHLIU&list=PLPPTG_EW3WHQ-CISTLoWUXCOONR6LMA-A&index=1

Current Events/Webinars

Problem Gambling Webinar

Wednesday March 25, 2020 1:00 PM

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/?sm=KjvUQcLiJLqQE3d1UiTsc>

[KdoDsIcCR0vHwSmHaLupoA_3D](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KdoDsIcCR0vHwSmHaLupoA_3D)

Jason Foundation Webinar

Friday March 27, 2020 10:00 AM

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NDKH8DT>

**IF YOU ARE AT HOME SICK
AND
NEED A MEETING**

*Pause A While will host a free
conference call for AA meetings.*

2pm Every Day
Starting Today

Dial-in number:

(425)436-6360

Access Code

422932#

Please Share this Announcement
We also need host volunteers to chair the phone meetings please
[email: pauldart@pauseawhile.org](mailto:pauldart@pauseawhile.org)

ONLINE RECOVERY MEETINGS

Many organizations are offering online meetings while social distancing is being recommended.

- List of online recovery meetings from Pro-A: <http://pro-a.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PROA-Online-Support-Resource-list-31720.pdf>
- Eight daily meetings from Unity Recovery: bit.ly/UnityRCOmtgs
- Alcoholics Anonymous online intergroup: bit.ly/AAintergroup
- Narcotics Anonymous online meetings: bit.ly/2IWqVd4

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

- [RecoveryLink](#): Daily recovery meetings, physical activities, meditations, and more via your smartphone or computer.
- [Connections Mobile App](#): Addiction Policy Forum's app will help connect you with trained counselors and peers, access e-therapy, & more.
- [WEconnect app](#): Helps with scheduling routines to stay active in recovery.
- This [Shatterproof blog](#) provides helpful suggestions to keep your recovery a priority during social distancing



Unfortunately, there are many Pennsylvanians that are dependent on alcohol. Therefore, it is important for all of us to be aware of and vigilant of alcohol withdrawal symptoms.



There are people and places that can help. If you or a loved one is experiencing withdrawal from alcohol or any other substance, please utilize the following resources:

Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Case Management 24/7: 1-800-220-1810
PA Get Help Now 1-800-662-HELP
FREE Conference Call AA Meetings: 425-436-6360 Access Code #422932

<https://www.addictionpolicy.org/connections-app>



A Smartphone App to Help with Recovery

To help support individuals in recovery from substance use disorder, Addiction Policy Forum has partnered with [CHESS Health](#) to launch Connections, a free smartphone app that is scientifically proven to support patients in recovery by reducing relapse and promoting pro-social engagement.

With the app you can...

- Track your sobriety,
- Access e-therapy to learn new recovery skills,
- Connect with trained counselors and peers through messaging,
- Clinical support available 7 days/wk, 9am -10 pm est(?)
- Track your treatment plan and set reminders,
- Journal daily about your journey,
- And discover helpful videos, testimonials and more through the unique resource library.

Connections is the only available app that is backed by [years of research](#) to support its provider-care management functionality, predictive relapse indicators, and analytics to reduce relapse.

**DO YOU NEED HELP WITH A
SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR
DEPENDENCY PROBLEM?**

For Treatment access:

Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Case Management

1-800-220-1810

Westmoreland
Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.
MAKING RECOVERY A REALITY

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. Try these tips from the [CDC](#):

Take a break from news & social media	Take care of your body	Connect with others	Make time to unwind