

Wolf visits Family Service Association of Bucks County

The agency in Middletown is one of the state's Centers of Excellence for opioid addiction treatment.

By JENNY WAGNER
STAFF WRITER

Gov. Tom Wolf on Friday visited the Family Service Association of Bucks County in Middletown for his latest stop on a tour of the state's new Centers of Excellence, designated to improve access to opioid addiction treatment.

"(Fatal drug overdoses are) a really big problem," Wolf said, citing statistics from 2014, when 2,500 Pennsylvanians died from drug overdoses, and last year, when that number was closer to 3,500.

"I don't think there's a Pennsylvanian who doesn't know somebody who's affected by this. We have an epidemic we've got to do something about."

The centers are the newest part of the state's multi-pronged efforts to end the epidemic. They will act as "health homes" or hubs that offer coordinated, comprehensive treatment for people with HealthChoices, Pennsylvania's Medicaid plan, according to the state Department of Human Services, which is overseeing the program.

Navigators or care coordinators at the centers will guide people through the system, which now will integrate substance use treatment, behavioral and physical health care, peer support, and medication-assisted treatment, if necessary. Medication-assisted treatment programs combine medication and therapy to help people achieve a successful recovery.

The program is designed



PHOTOS BY KIM WEIMER / PHOTOJOURNALIST
Gov. Tom Wolf greets Audrey J. Tucker, CEO of Family Service Association of Bucks County, during a news conference in Middletown on Friday to discuss efforts to battle the opioid epidemic.

to help people whose complex needs require comprehensive treatment and support, Audrey J. Tucker, CEO of Family Service Association, said.

"The work that we and other Centers of Excellence will do is considered the 'whole person' focus," she said.

Jason Snyder, who on Monday will transition from a position in the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to become the special assistant to the secretary of the Department of Human Services, said Medicaid data from 2014 is striking: Less than half of people who were diagnosed with a substance use disorder entered treatment. And of those people, he added, only a third remained engaged beyond 30 days.

"Treatment does work, and recovery is possible," said Snyder, sharing his own story as a person in

long-term recovery from addiction. He said two younger brothers died of drug overdoses.

When all the centers are up and running, Wolf said, the program is expected to allow an additional 11,000 people to get help each year.

The 2016-17 state budget included \$15 million in behavioral health and medical assistance funding, and the Department of Human Services was able to secure an additional \$5.4 million in federal funding for the program. The response was "overwhelming," according to the department, with 116 applications from providers in 45 counties, including five in Bucks and three in Montgomery.

Wolf announced the first phase of 20 Centers of Excellence in July. Those included Penn Foundation in Bucks and the Montgomery County Recovery Center. After calculating and



Wolf talks with state Rep. Frank Farry, R-142, of Langhorne, during a visit to the Family Service Association of Bucks County.

Dental Care Inc. in Montgomery County.

Wolf emphasized other parts of the state's ongoing efforts, including increased access to the overdose antidote naloxone and a new prescription drug monitoring program. He said there is still more to come.

Legislation that would strengthen the drug monitoring program is making its way through the General Assembly, Wolf noted, adding that he also would like to see seven-day limits

imposed on opioid prescriptions issued in emergency rooms and to minors.

"There is a way to make sure that you have a rich and full life, even with the disease of addiction and substance use disorder," Wolf said. "That's what these organizations are for, and we need to make sure we're putting adequate resources behind them."

Jenny Wagner: 215-949-5718; email jwagner@calkins.com; Twitter: @ATJWagner

facebook.com/pages/buckscouriertimes | www.twitter.com/CourierTimes

FINANCIAL INSIGHTS

"lighting the way to financial independence"

Glenn J. Hansen, CFP®, MS

Serving the Huntingdon Valley Community for over 30 years

- RETIREMENT PLANNING
- INVESTMENT PLANNING

215-938-8811

2347 Huntingdon Pike
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

FinancialInsightsPA.com

\$500,000 Account Minimum. Securities and advisory services offered through FSC Securities Corporation. Member FINRA/SIPC. Financial Insights is a marketing designation.

DO YOU HAVE TIRED, ACHY, HEAVY-FEELING LEGS?

COMPLIMENTARY PHYSICIAN VISIT

Tuesday, October 4th 4:00PM - 6:30PM

501 Bath Rd. Suite 215 Bristol, PA 19007

Receive a complimentary ultrasound screening and get immediate feedback from Dr. Ghalili.

To register for your 15 minute appointment call

(800) FIX-LEGS / (800) 349-5347

At **Center for Vein Restoration** we can bring relief from the pain, discomfort, and unsightly appearance of varicose veins.

Center for Vein Restoration

www.centerforvein.com

Board certified doctors treating varicose and spider veins.

Sands

BETHLEHEM

\$35

SLOT FREE PLAY YOUR TICKET TO WINNING BIG!

Ride the bus to Sands Bethlehem

- 3,000 of the hottest slots
- Table games including poker
- Incredible dining options including Steelworks Buffet & Grill
- The Outlets at Sands Bethlehem

And so much more!

BUS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Servicing Fairless Hills, Langhorne, & Feasterville

Provided by David Thomas Trailways

www.davidtours.travel • 215-969-6700 x3

Visit PaSands.com for motorcoach information and details on our many exciting promotions.

GAMBLING PROBLEM? CALL 1-800-GAMBLER.

Must be 21. Drivers license, passport or military ID required. Offer is complimentary and is issued one (1) per person. Slot Free Play is valid on date of issuance only; will expire at the end of the day at 5:59am. Offers are non-transferable. Offer and schedules are subject to change without notice. Anyone either voluntarily or involuntarily prohibited from gaming by the PGCB is ineligible for this offer. Must arrive via line run bus to receive offer.

