

Emergency Services

September 2016 Update

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Strengthening the Reach of 2-1-1 Support

[2-1-1](#) is a free, confidential referral and information helpline connecting people from all communities and of all ages to the essential health and human services they need, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Every day, thousands of people across North America contact 2-1-1 for information and support – including financial, domestic, health or disaster-related.

In the past, state and federal governments have created many 1-800 numbers, referral databases and outreach programs. 2-1-1 acts as a central hub in times of crisis, combining the government's duplicated efforts into one complete package. This can help increase government efficiency, while providing all residents with the help they so badly need.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the exploitation of a person through force, fraud or coercion for labor or commercial sex against their will. While it is most often associated with commercial sex, trafficking can take many forms, including child labor, domestic servitude and migrant working. Victims include men, women and children from all backgrounds and walks of life and it can happen anywhere – in homes and on the streets, in factories and mines, or on boats or in fields.

The [International Labor Organization](#) estimates that traffickers make more than \$150 billion in profit annually. That amounts to a greater daily profit than the global community spends to combat human trafficking over the course of an entire year.



Pennsylvania's Act 105

[Act 105](#) amends Pennsylvania's Crimes Code (Title 18) and Civil Code (Title 42) to revise laws regarding human trafficking. It now includes new definitions of sex trafficking in the Crimes Code, providing prosecutors with important tools to charge traffickers with felony offenses when they engage in conduct that subjects a person to sexual servitude or sex trafficking. Additional offenses are created if a person prevents or restricts an individual's ability to move or travel by destroying, concealing, or confiscating the person's passport, immigration or other government documents. The Act also increases fines and penalties against individuals and businesses involved in the crime of human trafficking and adds procedures for seizing and forfeiting assets. [Forfeitures will be used to help to fund investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes and to establish grant programs and services to victims of human trafficking.](#)

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley
Public Policy and Advocacy Committee

1110 American Parkway NE, Suite F-120, Allentown, PA 18109
610.758.8010 | [UnitedWayGLV.org](#)





Mental Health, Addiction and Opioid Epidemic

Coping with mental illness, substance abuse and addiction is a growing struggle in the Lehigh Valley. Heroin/opioid overdoses are now the leading cause of accidental deaths in Pennsylvania, killing more individuals each year than motor vehicle accidents.

Definitions

Opiates are naturally occurring and organic compounds (from opium poppy) which possess a pharmaceutical value to humans and animals and include morphine and codeine.

Opioids is a broader term and includes all drugs that produce a morphine-like effects including opiates, semi-synthetic opioids derived from opiates (including heroin, oxycodone, hydrocodone...) and synthetic opioids which are not derived from opiates (fentanyl, methadone).

Some opioids are used in addiction treatment as a form of drug replacement therapy because they are designed to produce slow-acting effects without producing a "high," like Methadone and Subutex.

"The epidemic of opiate addiction has gotten so bad over the last few years that finding better ways to treat addicts — and to stop the steady increase in overdose deaths — has become a rare point of bipartisan agreement.

The uptick in addiction to heroin and prescription opiates has spread to rural and suburban communities, including those in Pennsylvania. Overdose deaths in the commonwealth increased 14-fold between 1979 and 2014, according to a University of Pittsburgh study. And researchers said there's no reason to expect that those numbers won't rise for 2015 and beyond."

Jared Brey, [Philadelphia Magazine](#)
