

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020

PLENARY I

8:45 AM	That Was Then; This is Now	Last year, officials from the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and the Liberty Middle Atlantic High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area strategized about how to address the alarming rise in the misuse of psychostimulants in Pennsylvania. The 2019 Psychostimulant Symposium was one result of those discussions. Since that time, efforts have ramped up, and this second larger Symposium is being held. This session features a look back at where we began and a vision for moving forward.
9:00 AM	Stimulant Use Disorders: Epidemiology, Clinical Challenges, and Review of Treatments	Methamphetamine and cocaine use rates and overdose deaths are rapidly increasing in much of the United States. This presentation will review the new information on medical/psychiatric effects of stimulants as well as clinical challenges presented by individuals who use stimulants. Current protocols for addressing acute medical/psychiatric conditions will be described. Evidence-based behavioral/psychosocial strategies are presented, along with pharmacotherapies currently considered promising.

PLENARY II

10:00 AM	Weathering the Perfect Storm: Stimulant Treatment and Recovery During a Pandemic	As we rang in the year 2020, no one could have envisioned the impact that the lurking global pandemic would have on our lives. For those either seeking treatment or in recovery, the pandemic posed far more of a challenge than the toilet paper shortage and wearing a mask. Those on the front lines of treatment and recovery programs share their stories about the difficulties they faced, the solutions they created, and the way this has given them the flexibility to face future challenges.
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BREAKOUT I

11:00 AM	A – Stimulant Use Among Criminal Justice Involved Populations: Meeting Evolving Needs, Raising New Concerns	People who use drugs frequently intersect with the criminal justice system, whether as victims, defendants, persons in custody or under post-release supervision. Many law enforcement agencies, courts, and corrections systems have established programs for intervening, diverting or treating persons with substance use disorders who are “in the system.” However, most now are focused on opioid use disorders, and sometimes these programs are not well-equipped to intervene with people with stimulant addictions. As Pennsylvania grapples with a resurgent number of persons using cocaine and methamphetamine, and poly-substance use disorders are on the rise, the criminal justice system will increasingly be tasked with addressing the needs of this population while assuring the safety of their workforce and the public. This panel will explore some of the challenges facing criminal justice professionals managing programs for addressing these simultaneous sets of responsibilities.
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	B – Stimulant Use Disorders: The Problem and the Evidence-Based Treatments	There is no shortage of research supporting the effectiveness of evidence-based treatments like Buprenorphine and Methadone for opioid use disorder. What, then, are the evidence-based treatments for stimulant use disorder? To date, there is no pharmacological treatment approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of stimulant use disorders. Treatment providers and medical practitioners are left to rely on behavioral interventions for this disorder. This discussion will focus on promising behavioral/psychosocial evidence-based treatments for stimulant use disorder.
	C – Veterans in Treatment and Recovery: Serving Those Who Served	<p>While Veterans have unique talents and abilities, they also have unique challenges and obstacles. Veterans are a multifaceted population with a distinct culture which includes unique values, customs, and codes of conduct. Military service and the time after separating from military service can pose many trials to Veterans and family members. Gaining a better understanding of challenges facing a Veteran is important not only for the Veteran but the family as well. There are many factors involved in a Veteran’s reintegration into society. Some challenges include post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, physical handicaps, and thoughts of suicide. The expert panelists will afford their perspective on various forms of help available for the veteran population.</p> <p>Making evidence-based treatments for substance use disorders (SUD) available to Veterans is a mission priority of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The need for evidence-based treatment of stimulant use disorder is great given our nation’s burgeoning methamphetamine crisis which, together with cocaine misuse, continues to be implicated in fatal overdoses. Contingency management (CM), which reinforces healthy behaviors such as abstinence from substances, is among the most effective evidence-based treatments for stimulant use disorder. In 2011, VA launched an initiative to implement CM in its SUD specialty care programs. The VA initiative is the largest implementation of CM in history and thus provides a unique opportunity to assess adoption efforts in clinical programs and outcomes of patients. Dr. DePhilippis will describe CM and the very encouraging clinical outcomes that have emerged from VA’s nationwide implementation of it.</p>
	D – The Slippery Slope from Stimulants to Human Trafficking	Human trafficking, as defined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “involves force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act.” Typically, victims of this heinous crime often have vulnerabilities; such as migration/relocation, homelessness, substance dependency or mental health conditions. Substance dependency, particularly that of stimulants, is an increasingly common method of coercion in sex trafficking cases, which commonly carries consequences for survivors long after the trafficking ends.
BREAKOUT II		
12:45 PM	A – Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Stimulant Safety Initiative	The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has been a leader in safe prescribing initiatives through the efforts of the Opioid Safety Initiative, Psychotropic Drug Safety Initiative, and Academic Detailing Service. VHA is now adding efforts to ensure safe use of stimulant medications, building upon the success of and lessons learned from past efforts aimed at improving access to evidence-based prescribing for other key high-risk Veteran populations. The VHA Stimulant Safety Initiative will be a continued collaboration between mental health and pharmacy services and will provide access to quality metrics, clinical decision support tools with daily updated actionable patient lists, technical assistance for quality improvement, and a robust learning collaborative that ensures access to both provider and patient educational opportunities.

	B – Don't Forget the Elephant in the Room: Trauma-Informed Care	Understanding trauma does not mean you need to question every individual about their experience, rather we need to understand every individual may have a history of trauma and treat the individual accordingly. The cycle of trauma has the potential to lead to a lack of service engagement, an increase of symptoms, an increased risk of relapse, withdrawal from relationships and poor treatment outcomes. As providers work to become trauma-informed organizations, employees need to understand how trauma affects an individual seeking SUD services. This presentation will help staff understand the role trauma plays in an individual's life and explore the basic principles of Trauma-Informed Care within the substance use disorder treatment system.
	C – Harm Reduction: Meet Me and Walk with Me	We know people who avoid treatment due to fear, shame, lack of resources, or a supply cutoff. Harm Reduction offers a compassionate approach to reduce the consequences of substance abuse with a pathway into treatment when the person is ready. This presentation provides a brief history and benefits of harm reduction as an effective approach in public health. Examples and outcomes of harm reduction strategies such as Syringe Service programs, naloxone distribution and MAT will be reviewed as well as the value of training for families and caregivers on substance abuse and how to support a loved one. Finally, the presenter will discuss the important role of doctors, nurses, and EMTs in educating a patient in areas of self-care such as veins vs. arteries, wound care, Hep C, and sexual health while building trusting relationships and remaining an open door for help and hope.
	D – First-Hand Accounts from First Responders	Data shows us that there has been an increase in the supply of stimulants in the drug market, the purity of methamphetamine is unprecedented, and prices for these drugs are lower than they've been in decades. But how are changes in the supply impacting the health and safety of people who use drugs, and those who provide services to help them? Has there been a subsequent increase in the demand for emergency medical services? Can someone overdose from stimulants? What symptoms do these drugs cause during use or withdrawal that would prompt someone to call 911 or go to the hospital? Are first responders and emergency room staff prepared to care for individuals experiencing effects from stimulants? Do they have the supplies and other resources needed to adequately and safely respond? What medications, if any, can be useful in treating someone under the influence of stimulants in an emergency? What typically happens after first responders are called to the scene of someone using stimulants or after someone goes to the emergency department? What are the unmet needs on the front lines right now? This session will bring experts from the field, emergency responders who work in the community and hospitals, to begin to answer some of these questions and share their experiences.
PLENARY III		
1:45 PM	The Bias of First Impressions	We are all guilty of "first impressions." When we see someone who is helplessly addicted to meth, what do you think about? Sunken cheeks, tooth decay or missing teeth, etc. provide a first impression of symptoms, but do not tell the whole story about the person. Seeing them as someone's child or a mother or a father or a brother or a sister can be challenging. This session provides the tools to uncover, discover, and discard those biases.

DAY 2 – THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2020

PLENARY IV

8:15 AM	A Mother’s Journey with her Daughter’s Addiction	This mother bravely shares her perspective on a child’s substance use disorder. This powerful look at the challenges and emotions experienced by a family member when they love someone whose life is controlled by drugs will provide a new lens through which to view the contents of this Symposium.
8:45 AM	The Data Tells the Story	Let’s examine what we know about changes in drug seizures by law enforcement and the prescribing of controlled substances. How do those changes relate to drug use and misuse and to drug overdose deaths? Based upon that information, what can we say about what comes next? What does the future hold in store for us? This presentation examines these issues as studied by the National Emerging Threats Initiative, a national HIDTA Initiative, and what Pennsylvania is seeing from the perspective of the Department of Health.

BREAKOUT III

10:00 AM	A – De-escalating Aggression Arising from Stimulant Use: Protecting Responders and Persons in Drug-Induced Crises	Unlike the sedating effects of opioids and anti-anxiety medications, the use of stimulants can result in behaviors that include agitation, aggression and delusion. Particularly when used concurrently with other substances, the combined effects can confound a responder or practitioner seeking to aid a person in a drug-induced crisis. Further, as underlying mental-health disorders are often associated with drug use, the complexity of how to respond that protects both the individual and the persons seeking to help them increases. This session seeks to explore these intertwined factors and offer pragmatic responses that minimize the likelihood of physical force and resultant injury.
	B – Same Storm, Different Boat: Addressing Stimulant Use Disorder in Underserved Sectors of the Population	This panelist breakout session brings together speakers to discuss unique challenges faced by underserved sectors of the population when accessing or attempting to access services. This session sheds light on underserved populations, exploring resources and examining best practice techniques and skills, all while learning more about diverse pockets of populations specifically related to stimulant use.
	C – Thinking Outside the Box: Treatment and Recovery Programs that Unwrap New Possibilities	Unlike alcohol and opioid use disorder, no universally accepted evidence-based treatment model currently exists that integrates psychosocial and medical approaches to address stimulant use disorder. Many approaches that are used are based on psychosocial strategies, rather than behavioral interventions. These strategies rarely involve social supports. This panel will explore innovative and practical strategies that can effectively address the needs of individuals with stimulant use disorders.
	D – Poison Control Centers – If You Don’t Know About Us, This Session is the Antidote	The Poison Control Center (PCC) provides poison control services to people of all ages and is a dedicated resource available to both families and healthcare providers by offering a 24-hour, toll-free hotline for poisoning exposures. Additional roles of the PCC include active epidemic surveillance to identify public threats, analyze community trends; and advise public health agencies, advocacy groups, government officials and news media. This panel will present an opportunity to discuss the various other roles and perspectives of the PCC as it relates to stimulant use.

PLENARY IV

11:00 AM	Did Someone Say We’d Look Back on This and Laugh?	What do you get when you combine a professional comedian and 30 years of recovery? A way to add levity and a fresh perspective to a seemingly daunting subject. This session provides an upbeat and inspiring culmination to this Symposium.
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