



Luzerne County Becomes 20th County to Join Office of Attorney General's Treatment Initiative

Announcement Marks 20th County to Join OAG's Program with Local Law Enforcement to Connect Individuals Suffering from Substance Use to Treatment Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Monday, February 27, 2023

PENNSYLVANIA—Acting Attorney General Michelle Henry today announced that Luzerne County has joined the Law Enforcement Treatment Initiative (LETI), a program launched by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General in collaboration with law enforcement that provides assistance to Pennsylvanians suffering from substance use disorder in enrolling in treatment services. Nineteen counties across the Commonwealth have previously joined the LETI program.

PA LETI is a law enforcement-led treatment initiative that will allow Pennsylvanians in Luzerne County seeking treatment for substance use disorder to use their local law enforcement, county officials, and community stakeholders, to contact the Luzerne-Wyoming Drug and Alcohol Single County Authority without the threat of arrest.

"The opioid epidemic claims the lives of 14 Pennsylvanians every day," said Acting Attorney General Michelle Henry. "By connecting individuals to the treatment they need, LETI saves lives, makes our communities stronger, and helps to minimize the stigma associated with substance use disorder. I applaud the work that District Attorney Sanguedolce and our law enforcement partners across Luzerne County are doing to help build stronger, healthier communities."

Henry said partnering with Luzerne County law enforcement agencies and others under PA LETI will:

- Open their doors to those suffering from substance use disorder.
- Help identify individuals seeking treatment services.
- Assist with ensuring that people have transportation to treatment services.
- Maintain relationships with our local drug and alcohol administration to understand availability, and collect data to study outcomes.

In Luzerne County, individuals can contact a member of law enforcement, county official, or community stakeholder at any time to ask for a referral or to be connected to treatment with no threat of arrest or prosecution. This policy also includes the ability for law enforcement to connect individuals to treatment at their discretion. Law enforcement and county leadership in Luzerne County will be partnering with Luzerne-Wyoming Drug and Alcohol Single County Authority to facilitate these referrals.

“The Luzerne County District Attorney’s Office is proud to join the statewide Law Enforcement Treatment Initiative (LETI) program. This initiative allows our police to guide individuals who are suffering from substance abuse disorder into treatment, rather than criminally charging them when treatment, rather than punishment, is a more effective option. With overdose deaths as the number one accidental killer in our Commonwealth, this program is a forward-looking option to help those suffering from addiction to find the light at the end of the tunnel. It is our hope that this program will be a step in the direction of freeing those suffering from the bonds tying them to these poisonous substances,” said Luzerne County District Attorney Sam Sanguedolce.

The LETI program will continue the work that Luzerne County has been doing to address the substance use in their community. Since beginning in 2020, LETI has received nearly 700 referrals from concerned individuals throughout the Commonwealth.

“The Law Enforcement Treatment Initiative (LETI) in Luzerne County increases collaboration between our local Law Enforcement, Treatment Providers, and Luzerne County Drug & Alcohol Department,” said Ryan Hogan, Drug and Alcohol Administrator for the Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Drug and Alcohol Program and the Luzerne-Wyoming Single County Authority (SCA). “Conceptually, LETI offers a person struggling with a Substance Use Disorder with multiple access points for referral and linkage to treatment services, including at time of arrest. Additionally, LETI will alleviate added strain on law enforcement, the judicial system, and the corrections systems while potentially decreasing overdoses and overdose deaths while also increasing treatment admissions. The LETI Program is an exciting new initiative that has the potential to positively impact our residents, their families, and Luzerne County as a whole.”

Agent Janene Holter, PhD, is the Office of Attorney General’s dedicated full-time agent who coordinates PA LETI. Her work includes training, writing policies for each

participating county, convening key community stakeholders, and case management of LETI referrals.

LETI currently operates in Berks, Bradford, Cameron, Carbon, Chester, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Dauphin, Delaware, Elk, Fayette, Mifflin, Montgomery, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Snyder, Somerset, and Wyoming counties. District Attorneys in Pennsylvania interested in starting a PA LETI program should contact the Office of Attorney General at 570-826-2483.

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