

BERKS COUNTY OUTREACH SERVICES MODEL

The primary goal of Intravenous Drug User (IDU) outreach services is to reduce the risk of HIV and other communicable diseases and to connect the IDU with drug and alcohol services. Several community-based agencies in Berks County perform this vital service to this high risk population. Most of these services are done so without Berks SCA funding, therefore, the Berks SCA has limited authority in mandating how these services are provided. Outreach activities in Berks County SCA are overseen by the Berks SCA's Drug and Alcohol Program Representative position. At a minimum of twice-yearly the Outreach providers are contacted to discuss the status of the services and if any changes to the program have occurred. The following are providers of IDU Outreach activities in Berks County:

Co-County Wellness Services (CCWS) targets high risk individuals by maintaining a continued presence in the community. Current outreach activities in the City of Reading focus on area barber shops, known gathering places for the LGBTQ population and the Easy Does it Club House on Walnut Street. We have a regular presence, periodically offering onsite small group prevention interventions as well as HIV Counseling and Testing services at these locations. Outreach activities provided by CCWS focus on educational interventions designed to increase awareness of the relationship between behaviors and the risk for HIV/STDs/HCV. Through the distribution of prevention/education materials, as well as the development of an individual risk-reduction plan, high risk individuals are encouraged to consider small incremental behavioral changes that may lower their risk of infection(s). CCWS outreach also provides information regarding community resources and encourages individuals to access needed services. All outreach clients are offered information about CCWS services. CCWS outreach staff receives training from Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approved trainers. The same locations are visited on a regular basis to follow-up on prior contacts made at those sites. Areas of training for CCWS outreach workers includes: HIV prevention counseling skills, risk reduction planning, basic addictions training, and understanding of local community resources (including substance abuse treatment services, mental health services, pharmacies known to dispense syringes, and LGBTQ support groups) . Supervision of outreach workers is provided by our Deputy Director and Director of Program & Policy Services.

Berks Counseling Center (BCC) is contracted with the SCA to provide drug and alcohol and dual diagnosis treatment, HIV/AIDS Early Intervention Risk-reduction planning, and (BCC) provides direct community outreach to at risk populations via our satellite office at the Opportunity House (formerly Reading/Berks Emergency Shelter), a local homeless shelter in Reading, as well as through our MISS Program which provides outreach to pregnant and parenting chemically dependent women. BCC outreach includes interventions that are designed to increase awareness of the relationship between injection drug use and the risk for HIV/AIDS as well as other communicable diseases. BCC's outreach provides information regarding their vast array of drug and alcohol services and encourages IDUs to access drug and alcohol treatment as well as encouraging IDUs to engage in HIV/AIDS Early Intervention Services. These HIV/AIDS Early Intervention Services include HIV/AIDS pre and post test counseling and

HIV/AIDS risk reduction planning. BCC also collaborates with other local agencies through participation in community health fairs and events to identify and engage potential clients. Distribution of information regarding BCC services are readily made available to all who participate in these local events. For clients self-identifying as having a chemical dependency disorder, an attempt is made to engage that individual into drug and alcohol treatment services. If client information is available, a follow-up telephone contact is attempted to engage the client into need drug and alcohol services. BCC uses its Case Management staff to conduct outreach services. All BCC Outreach staff complete the Department of Health's Case Management core training requirements. Direct supervision of BCC outreach workers is the responsibility of the Case Management Supervisor who reports to BCC's Deputy Director.