

For Release Friday 3/26/2021

County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Alert

Commissioners' Update program will look at how the pandemic has affected the opioid crisis

Reading, PA— 3/26/2021 — The Berks County Commissioners will host a Media and Public Update program on **Wednesday, March 31, 2020 at 3:30 PM** on Microsoft Teams Live Event. Click [here](#) to find the link to this meeting. This week's program will focus on one of the often-overlooked hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic – the impact it has had on the opioid and overdose crisis and the response efforts from local entities. Members of the Council on Chemical Abuse will lead the discussion with the commissioners, members of local law enforcement and addiction recovery specialists. This Press Event will also be streamed Live to the Berks County [Facebook](#) page and BCTV.

Welcome – Commissioner Christian Leinbach

Comments – Commissioner Michael Rivera

Comments – Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt

Introduction of the Panel – Commissioner Barnhardt

- **Stanley Papademetriou** – Executive Director, Council on Chemical Abuse
- **John Adams** – Berks County District Attorney
- **Jonn Hollenbach** – Acting Berks County Coroner
- **Dr. William Santoro** – Chief of the Division of Addiction Medicine, Tower Health
- **Yvonne Stroman** – Community Programs Specialist, Council on Chemical Abuse

The Panel will address the following topics:

- 1) What is the nature and the extent of the opioid/overdose crisis, especially here in Berks County? This discussion will include such areas as: what are and where do people get opioid drugs; availability of the drugs; and overdose death rates.

- 2) How has Berks County responded to this opioid/overdose crisis? This discussion will include responses from: law enforcement; healthcare; substance use system; and community response.
- 3) How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the opioid/overdose crisis? This discussion will include: the availability of drugs; rates of overdose deaths; individuals' ability to access and receive treatment and other services.
- 4) **Questions and Answers** – Facilitated by Commissioner Barnhardt

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