



Opioid Intervention Court
CUMBERLAND COUNTY
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PRESS RELEASE

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Cumberland County Opioid Intervention Court Marks Two Years of Saving Lives

The Court Has Entered 127 Participants with Opioid Use Disorder Since Its Inception in 2018

Carlisle, PA – Cumberland County’s Opioid Intervention Court (OIC) today marked two years since its creation on Feb. 26, 2018, and is only the second of its kind in the U.S. The OIC has entered 127 participants with opioid use disorder. Enacted as a triage court to keep participants alive between arrest and adjudication of criminal charges, the court ensures participants are free of illicit substances and are engaged in treatment.

“A majority of the OIC participants have also shown a marked decrease in criminal activity, as well as improvements in relationships, community involvement, and employment, said Judge Jessica Brewbaker, who presides over the court. “OIC is an intensive program that engages participants in individual treatment and services through the criminal justice court system, while also providing participants with a team of enthusiastic supporters to aid them at the most vulnerable time of their lives.”

The court has recently lengthened its program to ensure that participants are achieving specific markers of success and establishing a firm foundation in recovery. Cumberland County continues to recognize a substantial decrease in overdose deaths, with 41 overdose deaths in 2019 compared to 86 in 2017 and 58 in 2018.

“Cumberland County has long understood that access to treatment, and intensive supervision of participation both play a vital role in tackling addiction issues, and making intervention successful,” said County Commissioner Gary Eichelberger. “Since the OIC’s inception, the board has invested \$231,000 in county tax dollars to supplement the state grant funding to sustain this effort. This public health crisis demands that we work toward new solutions, and OIC reflects our commitment to that. Judge Brewbaker and her team have carried through diligently in this pilot effort to identify more effective means of battling addiction, and striving for results that protect individuals, save lives, and ultimately strengthen our communities in the face of a major addiction crisis.”

The OIC team is comprised of Judge Brewbaker, Coordinator Erin Gardner, Specialty Court Coordinator Paul Polensky, a judicial law clerk, a district attorney, a public defender, three certified recovery specialists from The RASE Project, a prison drug and alcohol case manager, two Restorative Sanctions assistants, and two Adult Probation and Parole officers. The team thanks the community, the participants, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Cumberland County Commissioners for their continued support.

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