

## **Collegeville Police Department- Saving Lives and Saving Reputations Treatment Program to Help Persons with Substance Addiction**

The Collegeville Police Department has signed on to a new countywide treatment program which helps those who suffer from substance addiction. Police Chief Bart Bucher announced recently that Collegeville will participate in a program to help those who are fighting substance use disorder obtain addiction treatment through a program entitled Law Enforcement Treatment Initiative (LETI).

The LETI program will allow Collegeville residents suffering from substance use disorders to seek addiction treatment in two ways. Residents can present themselves at our Police Department and ask for help, or they can be informed about the program and be referred to it by the Chief or one of Collegeville's police officers as a diversion from arrest or prosecution.

Bucher explained that the primary objective of LETI is to reduce deaths, overdoses and crime associated with substance use disorders. Last year, 4,715 people in the Commonwealth died of a drug overdose. Over the course of the last five years, 1,030 people died in Montgomery County. Mayor Aidsand Wright-Riggins applauded the decision of the Collegeville Police Department to participate in the LETI program and pointed to it as an expression of our commitment to community policing and recognizing that drug addiction is a disease and not a crime.

Chief Bucher who is an Executive Board member of the Montgomery County Police Chiefs Association emphasized his hope that LETI will be a pathway to recovery for some in our community. He stated, "It is one strategy in addressing the opioid epidemic in our state. We have no desire to attempt to arrest our way out of this crisis. Our message to anyone struggling with addiction is turn to us for help." Wright-Riggins added that "This ability to make immediate referrals for treatment can save addicted persons from incurring a criminal record and even more importantly, perhaps even save lives."

For more information or referrals, contact the Collegeville Police Department dispatch number (610) 489-9332.