

May 2023 - Issue 6

# NEWSLETTER

*ECCF Substance Abuse Program*



## **National Prevention Week**

**May 7th - 13th**

National Prevention Week is a national public education platform showcasing the work of communities and organizations across the country dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and positive mental health.

### *Purpose of National Prevention Week*

- Involving communities in raising awareness of substance misuse and mental health issues, implementing prevention strategies and showcasing the effectiveness of evidence-based prevention programs.
- Fostering partnerships and collaborations with federal agencies and national organizations dedicated to improving public health.
- Promoting and disseminating quality substance use prevention and mental health promotion resources and publications.



**Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.**  
**Essex County Executive**

**Essex County Board of Commissioners**

**Director Ronald L. Charles**

**Deputy Director Regina Marrow**

**Essex County Department of Corrections**

***PUTTING ESSEX COUNTY FIRST***

# This Month's Highlight

## Mental Health Department

The ECCF Mental Health Department provides mental health and psychiatric services to inmates who have been remanded into custody.

### Meet the staff

#### **Dr. Fleming, PsyD, Director of Mental Health**

19 years of experience working in corrections and juvenile detention centers. He utilizes his education, training and expertise. He continues to treat patients and advocates for mental health support.

#### **Dr. Brazaitis, MD, PhD., Supervisor of Psychiatry**

He is board certified in Psychiatry and Somatic Illness. He is committed to the patients/residents at ECCF.

#### **Mr. Quijano, MD in Psychiatry**

38 years experience in the mental health field. His education and professional experiences has prepared him to provide the necessary mental health services to the ECCF inmate population. His goal is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of his most vulnerable clients who suffer from mental health illnesses.

#### **Mr. Zemzicki, Psychiatric Mental Health Practitioner**

4 years experience working at ECCF. He has extensive training and vast knowledge of the incarcerated population. He is motivated by his appreciative clients who receive the required care and assistance.

#### **Mr. Cox, Mental Health Specialist**

36 years of mental health experience in correctional and hospital settings. He is blessed to have earned various certifications. He is always prepared to listen to his clients and has a heart to understand them.

#### **Mr. Torres, MSW, LSW, Mental Health Counselor**

7 years working with the inmate population. He aims to assist the inmate population with mental health services and to reduce recidivism rate.

#### **Ms. Lampley, MA in Counseling, Mental Health Clinician**

14 years with in the mental health field. She enjoys with teens and young adults by inspiring them to set the tone of their future. Her goal is to assist inmates in independently identifying their symptoms and gaining insight into their illness.

#### **Ms. Pecora, LPC, NCC, Mental Health Counselor**

12 years of experience in mental health working in psychiatric hospitals, corrections and day program facilities. She provides services to the populations and instills a voice to those who do not have one. She continues to fight against the stigma and promotes mental health wellness.

#### **Ms. Cunas, MHAA, Mental Health Administrative Assistant**

1 year of experience in mental health in corrections. She provides administrative support and closely works with Medical. She is dedicated to her department and team.



## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. May is a month to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding behavioral health issues, as well as focusing on ways how mental illness and addiction can affects everyone - patients, providers, families and communities.

**"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." -Aristotle**



# ECCF Program Launch Event

This month, it was more than a pleasure for Dr. Vega, PsyD., Division Head of Inmate Programs & Community Partnerships, to host a program launch of Culinary Program The Fundamentals, The OSHA and Civil Construction Program and ESL & GED Program which will be offered at ECCF.

## OSHA is here!

Get your OSHA 40 card!!! OSHA 40-hour courses are intended to provide advanced information needed for ECCF residents who are looking for a career in construction and who want to learn OSHA health and safety regulation that apply to their future work locations. The OSHA 40 hour training courses also provide ECCF students with an extensive overview of how the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) functions and how to find the OSHA regulations that apply to business operations. There are no qualifications required to take the 40-hour training courses. Sign up!!! Don't miss out!!



## Ask the Doc!

Do you have questions about upcoming programs or substance abuse program questions for Dr. Vega? Submit your questions through ViaPath Tablet or provide your questions to the group facilitator during your substance abuse group session. Your questions and Dr. Vega's responses will be featured in our next newsletter.



# Tranq aka Zombie Drug: The Newest Drug That Is Taking Over Streets

In ECCF Substance Abuse Program's April Issue, provided an introduction of tranq aka Zombie Drug. This month's issue will discuss the statistics and harmful affects of this drug. Xylazine, "tranq," is not approved for human use. It has heavy sedative effects like an opioid, but it is not an opioid. This dangerous drug is so lethal that Narcan does not work, therefore, causing overdose deaths to rise at a rapid rate. Tranq is following in fentanyl's footsteps.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, people who are exposed to tranq often knowingly or unknowingly used it in combination with other drugs, particularly illicit fentanyl. People use tranq containing fentanyl to lengthen its euphoric effects. Most overdose deaths linked to both tranq and fentanyl also involved additional substance, including cocaine, heroin, benzodiazepines, alcohol, methadone and prescription opioids.



## Why should you care?

The effects:

- Drowsiness
- Amnesia
- Slow breathing
- Increased heart rate
- Low blood pressure
- Skin abscesses, rotting skin which can lead to amputations of arms and legs.
- Death

## Stats on Tranq

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, overdose deaths linked to Xylazine have spread westward across the United States, with the largest impact in the Northeast. Overdose death records in Philadelphia between 2010 and 2015 traced xylazine "tranq" in 2% of opioid-related overdose deaths. By 2019, 1 in 3 cases xylazine was involved with opioid-related fatal overdoses in Philadelphia. In May 2023, a study was published in the Drug and Alcohol Dependence Journal found that in 10 places across the country, xylazine was in 0.36% of overdoses deaths in 2015. However by 2020, tranq was linked to 6.7% of overdose deaths with the highest percentages in Philadelphia, Maryland and Connecticut.

# Getting Sober in Jail : Part 1

Getting clean and sober in jail may be the best thing that can happen for someone who is addicted to drugs and alcohol. Many offenders who committed crimes were under the influence or committed crimes due to addiction to drugs or alcohol. Recent statistics show that 78% of violent crimes and 84% of property crimes committed with alcohol and drugs being a major factor.



## What Substance Abuse Treatment Programs in Jails Can Do

Research has shown that addiction treatment programs for the incarcerated population can be very effective. With well-designed programs and careful planning, they can achieve the following:

- Reduce criminality
- Reduce inmate misconduct
- improve health and mental health symptoms within jail.
- Increase levels of employment and education upon returning to the community.

*God grant me the serenity to  
accept the things I cannot  
change;*

*Courage to change things I can;  
Wisdom to know the difference.*