

By Valley Youth House

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sharp rise in student homelessness in Philadelphia, from 8,363 in the 2021-2022 school year to more than 10,000 in 2023-2024. She noted the significant academic impacts of homelessness and the deep racial disparities, with more than 90% of affected students being youth of color.

"Our resolution is a call to awareness and a call to action," Smith-Wade-El said. "It makes Pennsylvanians aware of the youth homelessness crisis in PA, which has exploded in the past 10 years from just over 19,000 students to exceeding 50,000 today. It calls on us to recognize that the resources for homeless youth are even more limited due to federal funding cuts. It calls on us to act by planning for and supporting assistance programs so that our homeless youth have continued access to a quality education, as is their right. If we don't do anything, student homelessness will ultimately turn into adult homelessness—a prison of endless struggle and insecurity. Housing is the surest way for people to gain security in their lives. We must act now for our homeless community and for Pennsylvania."

Quadirah also acknowledged the School District of Philadelphia's historic 2023 investment in ECEH, which expanded school-based supports and community partnerships. Through this initiative, Valley Youth House and partner organizations served more than 1,000 students in the first year, providing on-site counseling, professional development, enrichment programming, and direct outreach to students who had disengaged from school.

An experienced youth services professional, Quadirah brings a strong background in crisis intervention, emergency housing navigation, and trauma-informed case management. She has supported youth experiencing homelessness, survivors of violence, and system-involved young people, always centering empowerment, equity, and collaboration. In her remarks, she emphasized the crucial role of youth leadership in shaping responsive services and solutions.

For more than five decades, Valley Youth House has been a pillar of support and hope for young people and families across Pennsylvania. Founded in 1973 as a single shelter in Bethlehem, VYH has grown into a statewide movement for youth empowerment, serving nearly 500,000 people, including 18,000 youth and families in 2024 alone. Today, VYH operates in 16 counties across Pennsylvania, carrying forward its mission to be the catalyst for youth to achieve their desired futures through genuine relationships that support families, ensure safe places, and build community connections.

Quadirah urged lawmakers to sustain and expand investment in these critical supports and called for passage of key housing and education legislation, including Pennsylvania House Bills 729, 730, and 1175. "We are building a future where no young person is left without support or a home," she said.



Boscola Bulletin

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 **LISA BOSCOLA** 18TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

Senate Committee Advances Boscola Proposal to Phase Out Toxic Additives in IV Bags and Other Medical Devices IV

By Senator Lisa Boscola

Earlier this week, the Senate Institutional Sustainability and Innovation Committee voted unanimously to advance my legislation, Senate Bill 804, that would phase out, and ultimately ban, a toxic chemical additive found in most intravenous (IV) bags and other medical devices.

Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP) is a common additive in the production of plastic medical devices meant to increase flexibility and reduce brittleness. However, researchers have found that DEHP leaches into the contents of these medical devices. Senate Bill 804 would set a timeline to phase out DEHP in medical devices in Pennsylvania by 2035. Additionally, the bill would prohibit the use of other toxic chemicals, known as Ortho-phthalates, as a replacement for DEHP.

When you go to the doctor, you expect to get better, not sicker. Study after study have shown the toxicity of these additives – so I was shocked to learn how common they are in medical settings. I felt the need to do something as critical decisions being made by manufacturers about what materials to use to produce the plastic bags and tubing will impact the future of a vulnerable patient.

The bill will next be considered by the full Senate. If enacted, Senate Bill 804 would make Pennsylvania one of the first states in the nation to ban DEHP. California and North Carolina each passed similar legislation in recent legislative sessions.

Hospitals across the Lehigh Valley have already begun phasing out medical devices containing this toxin PLUS Bethlehem is home to one of only two nationwide distributors of DEHP-free IV bags. B. Braun Medical is an industry leader in detoxifying our hospitals.

Today, B. Braun remains the ONLY supplier offering a full line of IV drugs, IV and nutrition solutions, and irrigation containers plus a robust line of IV sets and connectors not made with DEHP or PVC.

My hope, with the passage of this bill, is for Pennsylvania to remain a leader in protecting patients while getting harmful additives out of our medicine.

Pioneers in patient safety

B. Braun was the **first** medical supplier to recognize the potential *patient and environmental risks* associated with toxic chemicals like DEHP more than four decades ago.

Over the years, they have invested more than **\$1.2 billion** to establish a manufacturing infrastructure that can help healthcare systems comply and meet the demand for non-DEHP IV bags.







DID YOU KNOW?

NEED HELP?

It's okay to not be okay.

If you or a loved one are struggling, help is a call, text, or message away:

-  **Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
-  **Call 9-8-8 (starting July 16th)**
If not available in your area yet, call the Lifeline #
-  **Text 'PA' to 741741**
Crisis Text Line
-  **Visit 988lifeline.org/chat**
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline online chat