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PRESS RELEASE

**Chester County Collects Over
3,000 Pounds of Prescription Drugs**

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan announced that 3,747 pounds of prescription drugs were collected in 2015 through the Chester County drug drop box program. The program places secure drop boxes in police stations around Chester County so that citizens can safely dispose of prescription medications.

District Attorney Hogan stated, “The Chester County drug drop box program has been a tremendous success. We have safely taken almost two tons of prescription drugs out of circulation. Those are drugs that will never cause a child to overdose or become addicted to opiates. Those are drugs that will never get into our ground water and drinking water. Chester County is proud of this program.”

Representative Becky Corbin, a key early supporter of the program, stated, “Until this initiative was launched, many people didn’t know how to properly dispose of excess pain medications or that it was important to do so. I am glad the word is getting out and residents are responding. It is important that unused prescription painkillers not be stored in the home.”

The drug drop box program originally was started through a grant from the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association. More boxes were added later through funding from Pennsylvania American Water.

The drug drop boxes work as follows. Citizens can drop off prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications in the drug drop boxes. The boxes are

secure boxes located in police stations or other safe areas. The drop-offs are anonymous. The medication periodically is picked up by members of the Chester County Detectives and disposed of safely.

Chester County Commissioner Michelle Kichline stated, “Chester County isn’t immune to the opiate drug addiction crisis, and while education, treatment and recovery services are very important, so too are programs such as this, that actually take prescription drugs out of circulation. The steady level of drugs being collected month after month indicates that prescription practices need to be addressed, beginning with a reduction in the number of pills like OxyContin, Percocet, and Vicodin being prescribed by hospitals, urgent care facilities, and even family doctors.”

West Goshen Police Chief Joe Gleason, one of the participating police departments, stated, “West Goshen Police Department commends the Chester County District Attorney’s Office for the drug drop box program. This program provides an invaluable tool for anyone to contribute to the betterment of society by removing the availability of prescription drugs being put into the wrong hands. The residents of West Goshen Township continue to utilize this program daily which indicates the enormous benefit it provides.”

According to current statistics, approximately 70% of the United States population will take some type of prescription medication every year. The three most prescribed drugs in the United States are (in order): (1) antibiotics; (2) antidepressants; and (3) opiates, such as oxycodone.

In the Southeastern Pennsylvania region, the largest drug threat currently comes from prescription drugs and heroin, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration. This is the first time in the history of the region that prescription drugs have emerged as the largest threat.

Nationwide, more people are dying from prescription drug overdoses than from overdoses of any and all illegal drugs (including heroin, cocaine, and amphetamines). In Chester County for 2015, there were 57 overdose deaths. Out of these deaths, prescription drugs were involved in 42 deaths.

The most abused prescription drugs in the United States today are opioids, such as oxycodone. A few simple statistics show the explosive growth of this class of drugs. In 1998, 11.5 tons of oxycodone were produced world-wide. By 2010, 122.5 tons of oxycodone were produced. Over 80% of the oxycodone produced is consumed in the United States.

Vince Brown, the Executive Director of Chester County’s Drug & Alcohol Services, stated, “The success of the program is huge and the impact on our communities is significant. There is a direct link between the availability of prescription medication and the heroin epidemic and overdose deaths we’re facing nationally, in Pennsylvania and right here in Chester County. What experts know is that individuals with heroin addictions today are younger and more frequently getting hooked on drugs ‘not on the street,’ but ‘in the medicine cabinet.’ Raising awareness and getting the medications out of the house and disposed of properly means a safer environment for our children, families, and communities.”

District Attorney Hogan added, “When we started this program, we expected to see a large amount of prescription drugs turned in at first, but then for the amounts to decrease. Instead, we have seen a steady supply of prescription drugs being collected every month, demonstrating the prevalence of prescription drugs in our society, particularly opioids. This program is part of Chester County’s multi-disciplinary approach to fighting the problems caused by drug abuse.”

The drug drop boxes can be found at the following locations:

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| Caln Township
Police Department
253 Municipal Drive
Thorndale, PA 19320 | Tredyffrin Township
Police Department
1100 DuPortail Road
Berwyn, PA 19312 |
| City of Coatesville
Police Department
1 City Hall
Coatesville, PA 19320 | Valley Township
Police Department
890 W. Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320 |
| East Brandywine Twp.
Police Department
1212 Horseshoe Pike
Downingtown, PA 19335 | Upper Uwchlan Township
Police Department
140 Pottstown Pike
Chester Springs, PA 19425 |
| Kennett Square Borough
Police Department
115 N. Broad Street
Kennett Square, PA 19348 | West Brandywine Twp.
Police Department
198 Lafayette Road
Coatesville, PA 19320 |
| New Garden Township
Police Department
8934 Gap Newport Pike
Landenburg, PA 19350 | West Caln Township
Police Department
721 W Kings Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320 |
| North Coventry Township
Police Department
845 South Hanover Street
Pottstown, PA 19464 | West Goshen Township
Police Department
1025 Paoli Pike
West Chester, PA 19382 |

Oxford Borough
Police Department
57 N. Fourth Street
Oxford, PA 19363

Parkesburg Borough
Police Department
315 W. First Ave., Bldg. 2
Parkesburg, PA 19365

Phoenixville Borough
Police Department
351 Bridge Street
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Sheriff's Office
Chester County Justice Ctr.
201 W. Market Street
West Chester, PA 19380

West Vincent Township
Police Department
729 St. Matthews Road
Chester Springs, PA 19425

West Whiteland Township
Police Department
101 Commerce Drive
Exton, PA 19341

Westtown-East Goshen
Regional Police Department
1041 Wilmington Pike
West Chester, PA 19382

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan