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February 10, 2017

PRESS RELEASE

**Chester County Collects Over
8,000 Pounds of Prescription Drugs**

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan announced that over 8,000 pounds of prescription drugs were collected in 2016 through the Chester County drug disposal box program. The program places secure drop boxes in locations around Chester County so that citizens can safely dispose of prescription medications.

The drug disposal box program was started in 2014 by the Chester County District Attorney's Office, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, and a few local police departments. The program then expanded dramatically, and now includes cooperation between many police departments, Paoli Hospital, the Chester County Health Department, Pennsylvania American Water, the Chester County Commissioners, the National Guard, and other volunteers.

The yearly totals for the amount of drugs collected in Chester County through the drug disposal box program are as follows:

2014	1392.8 lbs.
2015	2967.4 lbs.
2016	8073.6 lbs.

District Attorney Hogan stated, "The drug disposal box program continues to be a success in Chester County. The safe disposal of prescription medication, especially powerful opioids, keeps these drugs from getting into the wrong hands.

We are protecting both our children and our environment, two goals everybody supports.”

Paoli Hospital, part of Main Line Health, recently installed a prescription drug drop box to allow for the safe and anonymous disposal of unneeded, unwanted, or expired medications. The drop box is located in the Paoli Hospital valet lobby. It is monitored by Paoli Hospital security staff and emptied by the Willistown Township Police Department.

Jim Paradis, President of Paoli Hospital, stated, “We have come a long way from flushing unwanted pills down the drain into the water system. Installing this box won’t completely solve this problem, but it’s one more step in the right direction, and it gives us an opportunity to continue our efforts to combat the opioid crisis in our community.”

“Chester County’s prescription drug disposal boxes are an effective, critical component in working to prevent addiction,” said Rep. Ryan Costello (PA-06), a member of the Bipartisan Task Force to Combat the Heroin Epidemic. “The strong leadership from the District Attorney’s Office and partnering agencies and organizations, combined with state and federal assistance, is making a positive impact in tackling the opioid epidemic. We must continue to focus on this epidemic because there is more work to do.”

The drug disposal 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 by the National Guard.

Chief Brenda Bernot of the Westtown/East Goshen Police Department, one of the participating police departments, stated, “The medication collection box in the lobby of our police department is a service that our citizens value because of its convenience. Our police department also values this service because we recognize that disposing of unwanted, unused, or expired medications in this manner is not only an environmentally friendly method of disposal, but also a foolproof method to ensure that the medications do not end up falling into the hands of children, addicts, or criminals.”

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. Nationwide, more people are dying from prescription drug overdoses than from overdoses of any and all illegal drugs (including heroin, cocaine, and amphetamines). In fact, drug overdoses have become the leading cause of accidental deaths in the United States, surpassing traffic accidents and guns.

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 2013, 138 tons of oxycodone were produced. Over 90% of the oxycodone produced is consumed in the United States.

Jeanne Casner, Director of Chester County's Health Department, stated, "Chester County is very fortunate to have such a successful medication disposal program through the collaboration of Chester County agencies. Many people who misuse prescription drugs get them from friends and family, who may be unaware that their unused prescriptions are missing. Ensuring people have safe and known locations for disposing of unused or unwanted prescriptions is a critical element in our broader efforts to reduce access to and misuse of prescriptions, and prevents the prescriptions from ending up in our wastewater treatment facilities and contaminating groundwater."

District Attorney Hogan added, "Working together, Chester County has taken an aggressive approach to combating the scourge of opioids and heroin. We use the drug disposal boxes. Every police department carries naloxone. We run a strong Drug Court program. We have a multi-disciplinary task force, which has been educating doctors on the dangers of these drugs. We speak to students through the Narcotics Overdose Prevention and Education program. We target drug dealers for prosecution. As a result, Chester County has the lowest overdose rate in Southeastern Pennsylvania. But we must do more. Every child who dies from an overdose is a tragedy for some family."

There are 23 drug disposal boxes located in Chester County. The drop boxes can be found at the following locations:

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
Easttown Township Police Department 566 Beaumont Rd Devon PA 19333	West Brandywine Twp. Police Department 198 Lafayette Road Coatesville, PA 19320
Kennett Square Borough Police Department 115 N. Broad Street Kennett Square, PA 19348	West Caln Township Police Department 721 W Kings Highway Coatesville, PA 19320
New Garden Township Police Department 8934 Gap Newport Pike Landenberg, PA 19350	West Chester University Police Department 690 South Church Street West Chester PA 19383
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	West Vincent Township Police Department 729 St. Matthews Road Chester Springs, PA 19425
Parkesburg Borough Police Department 315 W. First Ave., Bldg. 2 Parkesburg, PA 19365	West Whiteland Township Police Department 101 Commerce Drive Exton, PA 19341
Phoenixville Borough Police Department 351 Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department 1041 Wilmington Pike West Chester, PA 19382

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

Willistown Township
Police Department
688 Sugartown Road
Malvern, PA 19355

Paoli Hospital
255 West Lancaster Ave.
Paoli, PA 19301

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan