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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 13, 2015

DRUG OVERDOSE EPIDEMIC DEMANDS COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE

ABANDON SCRIPTS!

Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal
Saturday, October 17, 2015 from 10 AM to 2 PM.
To find a drop off site near you, please visit:
www.montcopa.org/da

An illustration of a large ship at sea, dumping various medications into the water. In the foreground, there are several pill bottles and loose pills floating on the water's surface.

Event Sponsored By The
Montgomery County
District Attorney & Police Chiefs



***Anti-overdose drug and prescription medication takeback program
are a lifesaving combination***

With drug-related abuse and fatalities on the rise, the Montgomery County District Attorney's office, in partnership with the Montgomery County Overdose Task Force and Police Chiefs of Montgomery County, today announced life-saving initiatives focused on prevention, intervention and treatment that directly aid law enforcement and civilian response to the drug addiction epidemic.

A county-wide prescription drug take-back program, including new drop-off boxes, will minimize the potential for young people and addicts to gain access to narcotics, while law enforcement officers armed with life-saving naloxone will give individuals who overdose a second chance at a drug-free life.

"Drug addiction and overdose is a comprehensive problem that demands a comprehensive response," said District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman.

District Attorney Ferman was joined today by Executive Director of the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association Richard Long, Pennsylvania American Water President Kathy L. Pape, East Norriton Police Chief Karyl J. Kates and Police Chiefs from throughout Montgomery County to announce a series of lifesaving measures for the prevention and treatment of narcotics abuse and overdoses.

In terms of prevention, the safe disposal of unwanted or expired prescription medication has been a critical focal point in stopping addiction, overdoses and illegal drug sales in the county and state. As a result, new MedReturn Drug Collection Units have been added to the headquarters of both the East and West Norriton Police departments. Disposal is free and anonymous, but officials urge people to remove any prescription labels or place the medication in a plastic bag.

The boxes are funded by the Pennsylvania American Water Company, a firm that provides water and sewage services to over 2 million residents within the state. The company has sponsored 10 boxes within their service area as part of a statewide goal, set by the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to establish over 250 boxes statewide.

"Experience shows that the most effective and cost-efficient way to ensure high-quality water at the tap is to keep our source waters clean," said Pennsylvania American Water President Kathy L. Pape. "We support this partnership because it helps spread an important message to the public: 'Don't flush medications down the toilet, where they would eventually end up in our waterways.'"

In October 2013, a national study revealed that Pennsylvania ranks 14th in the nation for the number of drug overdose deaths, with an 89% increase observed between 1999-2010. In fact, in 2010 the number of deaths from prescription drugs (such as opioids) was greater than the combined toll of heroin and cocaine-related fatalities.

District Attorney Ferman noted that the MedReturn boxes will play a significant role in preventing teenagers from abusing prescription drugs. An estimated 3 million teenagers will become prescription drug abusers this year, since 27% of teens falsely believe that abusing prescription drugs is safer than using street drugs.

In the case of fatal overdose, District Attorney Ferman announced the Office of District Attorney, in partnership with Capital BlueCross will equip police and other first responders with the drug Naloxone. Naloxone is an anti-opioid that has proven extremely effective in quickly saving the lives of victims who have overdosed on heroin and other highly addictive drugs.

"Situations involving potential fatalities, especially as a result of a narcotics overdose, are extremely time sensitive and it is imperative that first responders not only arrive on the scene quickly, but have the appropriate tools and skills to save lives," said District Attorney Ferman. "The availability of Naloxone is a game-changer for how we respond appropriately and successfully to overdose cases."

Since Naloxone was made available in Montgomery County first responders have saved 16 lives, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs. Officers in Limerick, Abington and Upper Providence townships have been commended for their heroic and life-saving actions under pressure.

"We've had three cases of Naloxone use by our officers so far," said Limerick PD Chief William Albany: "In all three cases, the overdosed victim was found unresponsive at home by a family member or loved one, who called 911. The officers were the first to arrive on scene, before EMS, where they assessed situation. Upon finding the victim to be unresponsive, the officers administered Naloxone, and within thirty seconds each victim regained consciousness, and a potential tragedy was averted."

Funding for the current supply of Naloxone has come from the District Attorney in the form of \$156,975 in drug forfeiture assets from Montgomery County, as well as funding from Capital BlueCross Insurance. The current supply of the drug in Montgomery County is set to expire in November of this year, so it was critical to resupply our first responders.

Although Naloxone's consistent and seemingly-miraculous results are a cause for celebration, it should be noted that the efforts to stem the tide of growing opioid abuse neither begins nor ends with it.

"As amazing as Naloxone is, more work is needed on the intervention and treatment side of the issue. Our office and our task forces' efforts are focused in education and prevention, to help people avoid getting into these situations with dangerously addictive drugs in the first place," said Montgomery County First Assistant DA Kevin Steele. "Hopefully having Naloxone in our police cars will provide first responders with a tool to provide some overdose victims with a second chance at life and with it, hopefully a realization they've been given a gift and an opportunity to turn their life around."

The prescription drug drop off boxes and the naloxone program are both administered by the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association.

About MedReturn Boxes:

Drugs accepted by the MedReturn boxes include prescription and over-the-counter solid medications such as tablets and capsules, liquid medications, inhalers, creams and ointments, nasal sprays, and pet medications. Intravenous and injectable solutions, as well as needles, are not currently accepted.

For a statewide disposal box location finder, please visit www.ddap.pa.gov; information about treatment for prescription drug addiction is also available there. If there is no box near your area, make sure to still properly dispose of unwanted or expired prescription drugs by placing them in a container mixed with used coffee grounds or cat litter, and throwing it in the garbage. For more information on prescription drug disposal go to the Montgomery County District Attorney's website at www.montcopa/da.

Approved for release:

Risa Vetri Ferman

October 17, 2015 Drug Take Back Day Sites:

Abington Police Department, 1166 Old York Rd., Abington, PA 19001

Cheltenham Township Police Department, 8230 Old York Rd., Elkins Park, PA 19027

Collegeville Borough Police Department – Collegeville Fire Department, 25 E. Fifth Ave.,
Collegeville, PA 19426

Conshohocken Borough Police Department, 720 Fayette St., Conshohocken, PA 19428

East Norriton Township Police Department, 2501 Stanbridge St., East Norriton, PA 19401

Hatfield Township Administration Building, 1950 School Rd., Hatfield, PA 19440

Hatboro Police Department, 120 E. Montgomery Ave., Hatboro, PA 19040

Jenkintown Borough Police Department, 700 Summit Ave., Jenkintown, PA 19046

Limerick Township Police Department, 646 West Ridge Pike, Limerick, PA 19468

Lower Pottsgrove Township - Sanatoga Fire House, 2222 E. High St., Pottstown, PA 19464

Lower Providence Township Police Department, 100 Parklane Drive, Eagleville, PA 19403

Marlborough Township Police Department, 6040 Upper Ridge Rd., Green Lane, PA 18054

Montgomery Township Police Department, 1001 Stump Road, Montgomeryville, PA 18936

New Hanover Township Police Department, 2943 N. Charlotte St., Gilbertsville, PA 19525

Pottstown Police Department, 100 East High Street, Pottstown, PA 19464

Royersford Police Department, 300 Main St, Royersford, PA 19468

Springfield Township Police Department, 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038

Towamencin Township Police Department, 1090 Troxel Rd., Kulpsville, PA 19443

Upper Merion Township Police Department, 175 West Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA
19406

Upper Moreland Township Police Department, 117 Park Ave., Willow Grove, PA 19090

Upper Providence Township Police Department, 1286 Black Rock Rd., Oaks, PA 19456

West Conshohocken Borough Hall, 112 Ford Street, West Conshohocken, PA 19428

West Norriton Township Police Department, 1630 W. Marshall St., Jeffersonville, PA 19403

Whitpain Township Police Department, 960 Wentz Rd, Blue Bell, PA 19422