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MONTGOMERY COUNTY, HIDTA OFFICIALS BEGIN PARTNERSHIP TO THWART DRUG TRAFFICKING AND RELATED CRIMES

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Oct. 3, 2017) — Last week, Montgomery County was named by White House Acting Drug Policy Director Richard Baum as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), joining 27 other areas of the country in combining forces to combat drugs and drug trafficking. Today, officials from Philadelphia-Camden HIDTA, the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, the Montgomery County Detective Bureau, and the Montgomery County Drug Task Force met to begin the process of joining forces.

Since Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele took office, one of his priorities has been fighting the heroin-opioid-fentanyl epidemic. Steele noted that this designation provides new resources and support to do so. "This HIDTA designation will now allow us to stand united with our law enforcement regional partners to battle the opioid epidemic that has taken hold of our communities. Together at the local, state and federal level, we will fight those who traffic and import drugs into our communities and the dealers who are selling the heroin and fentanyl that have already killed so many."

"The Philadelphia-Camden HIDTA is gratified that Acting Director Baum has recognized the significant drug threats and related challenges affecting communities in Montgomery County, Pa. With this designation, we look forward to partnering with law enforcement, public safety, public health and substance use treatment and prevention agencies and organizations in the county and its municipalities to combat drug trafficking, get help for those with substance use disorders, and prevent drug misuse and abuse," said Jeremiah A. Daley, executive director of Philadelphia-Camden HIDTA. "I am particularly grateful to District Attorney Kevin Steele and his staff, who have been working side-by-side with us through the petitioning process. As a result of his leadership, Montgomery County now joins our other five counties, in three states, eligible for additional federal resources for attacking this regional and national crisis head on."

Illustrated on the Philadelphia-Camden HIDTA website (<http://www.pchidta.org>) is the fact that the PCHIDTA is comprised of more than 35 participating federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, which enables a coordinated approach by law enforcement to combat drug trafficking, money laundering, drug-related violent crime and gang threats in the HIDTA-designated counties of Philadelphia, Chester, Delaware and now Montgomery County in Pennsylvania, New Castle in Delaware and Camden in New Jersey. By fostering collaborations among its more than 250 participants through the establishment and funding of enforcement initiatives and by providing support services, such as training, information technology, and intelligence analysis, the PCHIDTA has leveraged finite agency resources and engendered innovative approaches to drug law enforcement since 1995 in the Philadelphia region. Extending our services to the Lower Delaware Valley's law enforcement community, PCHIDTA provides its training, intelligence analysis and information sharing capabilities to agencies throughout the region.

The HIDTA program was created by Congress in 1988 and serves as a catalyst for coordination among Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug trafficking regions of the United States. Law enforcement organizations working within HIDTAs assess drug-trafficking problems and design specific initiatives to decrease the production, transportation, and distribution of drugs.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele