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## **Governor Wolf Signs Bills to Battle Heroin and Opioid Crisis**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, Governor Wolf signed legislation to battle Pennsylvania’s heroin and opioid epidemic. This legislation will strengthen the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, restrict the number of pills that can be prescribed to minors or in emergency rooms, establish education curriculum on safe prescribing, and create more locations for the drop-off of prescription drugs.

“I am proud to sign a package of bills that represents the work that we have all done together to address the heroin and opioid abuse crisis, and begins to curb the effects of this public health epidemic in Pennsylvania,” said Governor Tom Wolf. “Four weeks ago, I addressed a joint session of the General Assembly to outline a set of legislative goals that would help us tackle this public health crisis and together, the General Assembly and my administration committed to help the victims of substance use disorder, and the communities that have been devastated by this terrible disease.”

“The epidemic will be fought piece by piece with hard work and victories like the ones we celebrate today,” said Liz Roderick, who lost her brother to substance use disorder. “Our family is honored to be standing with the Governor as he signs these bills that will ultimately save lives and prevent tragedy like the one that has scarred our family and so many others. It is my hope that we will continue to combat the stigma of addiction and continue to fight for a stronger system that will protect our loved ones.”

“The legislation enacted today with the Governor’s signature will have a direct and meaningful impact on the health and welfare of our Commonwealth and its citizens,” said Senator Gene Yaw. “These five new measures together will work to combat the rise in heroin and opioid abuse impacting every corner of our

state. I have said that each of these bills can be compared to the strands of a rope. Each strand represents one measure to fight the epidemic. Alone, they might not be fully effective, but together they can strengthen the rope and our collective efforts. I appreciate the support of the legislative leadership and Governor Wolf, and I am thankful for the Governor's prompt signing of these bills into law."

"The opioid crisis, drug overdoses and abuse must be dealt with on multiple levels," said Senator John Wozniak. "The legislation passed by the General Assembly, which will be signed into law today, will help address critical aspects of the problem. These new initiatives will give those who are involved in the fight more resources to address the crisis."

"The legislature has made significant steps this session toward curbing our state's opioid abuse crisis," said Representative Doyle Heffley. "This is a nonpartisan issue impacting every community in Pennsylvania, and we need to continue to do all we can to prevent opioid abuse as well as provide adequate treatment options for those in recovery."

"The PA HOPE Caucus was formed out of an unfortunate necessity, because Democratic and Republican legislators recognized that we had a drug epidemic sweeping our state," said Representative Ed Gainey. "We joined Governor Wolf in reaching out to communities across Pennsylvania to let people know that we would do whatever it takes to help lead them from addiction to recovery. The passage, and now enactment, of these bills is the result of those conversations."

Below are the bills that Governor Wolf Signed into law:

Act 126 SB1367 (Yaw): This bill amends Title 35 (Health and Safety) to establish restrictions on physicians' ability to prescribe opioids to minors, including limiting prescriptions to seven days and requiring physicians to take a number of steps before issuing the first prescription in a single course of treatment. This bill passed unanimously in the Senate on 9/28/16.

Act 125 SB1368 (Killion): This bill establishes a safe opioid prescribing curriculum in medical colleges and other medical training facilities offering or desiring to offer medical training. The curriculum must include: current, age-appropriate information relating to pain management; alternatives to opioid pain medications; instructions on safe prescribing methods in the event opioids must be prescribed; identification of patients who are at risk for addiction; and, training on managing substance use disorders as chronic diseases.

Act 124 SB1202 (Yaw): This bill amends the Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Program (ABC-MAP) Act requires continuing education in pain management, addiction and dispensing for prescribers and dispensers. The Governor's Office successfully passed an amendment that

would require prescribers to check the ABC-MAP every time they prescribe an opioid or benzodiazepine. In addition, the Administration's amendment would require dispensers to input prescription data to the ABC-MAP within 24 hours of dispensing. Current law gives dispensers (who are required to enter information into the ABC-MAP when they dispense an opioid or other controlled substance) 72 hours to log in and enter information.

Act 122 HB1699 (Brown): This bill mandates that hospital emergency departments and urgent care centers may not prescribe opioids in quantities that last more than seven days and they may not write refills for opioid prescriptions.

Act 123 HB 1737 (Maher): This bill would allow all federal, state and local law enforcement entities, hospitals, assisted living facilities, home health care agencies, long-term care nursing facilities, hospice, and commonwealth licensed pharmacies to serve as drop-off locations for any extra, unwanted, or expired prescription drugs or over-the-counter pharmaceutical products.

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