



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Honors Individuals During Overdose Awareness Vigil

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) and the Department of Health partnered with the Pennsylvania Recovery Organization Alliance and the Pennsylvania Harm Reduction Coalition to host a vigil in observance of Overdose Awareness Day. The event brought together stakeholders, advocates, and community members to honor individuals who have lost their battle with addiction in the Capitol Rotunda.

“Today’s vigil unifies all Pennsylvanians – our family members, neighbors, coworkers,” said DDAP Secretary Jennifer Smith. “With an individual dying from an overdose every 19 minutes in America, the disease of addiction has affected each of us in some way. It is important for us to come together as a community to help break stigma. By providing safe, supportive environments for individuals to enter recovery, we are empowering them with the hope of a brighter future.”

“Opioid use disorder is a disease and we must recognize it as a disease,” said Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine. “Together, we can work to treat this disease and ensure that those who are struggling get the treatment they need. We must continue to have hope for our loved ones, our communities and our state.”

Since taking office, Governor Wolf has made combatting the opioid crisis and reducing overdose deaths a top priority. In April 2015, Pennsylvania’s Physician General signed a standing order prescription for first responders and the general public to obtain the life-saving drug, naloxone. Additionally, the 2017-18 budget included \$5 million to provide 60,000 naloxone kits to first responders throughout Pennsylvania over a two-year period. Police have reported more than 7,600 lives have been saved since June 2018.

“We know there are improvements in the 2018 overdose numbers in regions throughout the commonwealth. However, we must continue to push forward with expanding access to treatment for individuals and educating the public of the implications of drug-usage,” said Smith.

Individuals seeking recovery resources for themselves or a loved one can call the toll-free PA Get Help Now helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). A live chat option is also available online or via text message at 717-216-0905 for those seeking help who may not be comfortable speaking to a helpline operator.

For more information on the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and treatment options around the commonwealth, visit www.ddap.pa.gov and <https://apps.ddap.pa.gov/gethelpnow/>.

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