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Auditor General DePasquale Supports Legislation to Close Loophole which Allows Lethal Drugs to Enter U.S. through Postal Service

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today praised national legislative efforts to help prevent the shipment of dangerous synthetic drugs into the country through the United States Postal Service.

Drug traffickers are killing thousands of Americans by using the mail system to ship dangerous drugs, like fentanyl, a potent synthetic opioid pain medication.

“Last year an average of 67 Pennsylvanians died every week from drug overdoses,” DePasquale said. “We could save thousands of people and their families from being destroyed. We cannot continue to allow overseas drug traffickers to use our postal system to make money at the expense of American lives. We must do everything possible to stop these illegal drugs from crossing our borders and killing our friends and family members.”

The federal Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act would require mail shipped through foreign postal services to be required to use the same electronic advanced data as private carriers, like UPS or FedEx. The electronic data would include who and where it is coming from, who it’s addressed to, where it’s going and what’s in it before it enters the country.

The bill would help law enforcement better screen for deadly synthetic drugs, like fentanyl, which is 25 to 40 times more potent than heroin. The U.S. Postal Service does not require advanced electronic customs data.

DePasquale said he urges swift discussion and action on STOP legislation in Washington.

Nearly 3,500 drug-related overdose deaths were reported in Pennsylvania in 2015; nearly 30,000 people died nationwide from opioid-related overdoses in 2014.

DePasquale said his support of STOP is part of his effort to help address the opioid addiction crisis gripping the state and the nation. Currently, auditors are working to determine if three state agencies – the Departments of Corrections, Human Services and Drug and Alcohol Programs – are monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of opioid-related drug treatment initiatives in Pennsylvania.

“Every day, we hear the tragic news of someone overdosing on illegal drugs. It’s devastating and it’s heartbreaking. Opioid addiction is killing people, ripping apart families and tearing apart our society. We have to put an end to this threat,” DePasquale said.

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