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## News for Immediate Release

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### **Auditor General DePasquale Says Lancaster Cold Case Shows Value of DNA Evidence**

*Says DNA evidence from Pennsylvania's backlog of rape kits could help catch criminals*

**HARRISBURG** – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today said the recent arrest in the 1992 case of Lancaster County schoolteacher Christy Mirack shows the value of prosecutors continuing to seek DNA matches in cold cases.

“Because of the perseverance of the Lancaster County District Attorney’s Office, DNA evidence found at the scene of Christy Mirack’s assault and murder has finally been linked to a suspect,” DePasquale said. “Investigators had long known the value of having DNA samples from the scene, but they were unable to match it to a suspect until now.”

DePasquale said cold cases such as this one demonstrate why it’s vital for Pennsylvania to eliminate its backlog of untested rape kits and enter those results into the federal DNA database to help identify serial criminals.

In April, the Department of Health released [its annual mandated report](#) on Pennsylvania’s backlogged rape kits, meaning those awaiting testing for 12 months or more. The report showed that 929 kits were backlogged as of Dec. 31, 2017 — a decrease from 1,908 kits that were backlogged as of Dec. 31, 2015.

“More than 1,000 people now know whether the grueling exam they went through resulted in identifiable DNA evidence,” DePasquale said. “This result is one of the reasons I have been highlighting this issue for the last few years: Sexual assault victims deserve justice. And that’s exactly what testing these kits can help provide for them.”

In September 2016, DePasquale released a [special report on the state’s untested rape kits](#) that found inadequate communication to local law enforcement agencies, errors in DOH’s official 2015 report and resource shortages that could be leading to delayed justice for victims. The 67-page special report featured three observations and 10 recommendations.

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