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Auditor General DePasquale Highlights York County's Innovative Criminal Justice Reform Plan, Applauds Forward-Thinking Approach

YORK – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today met with York County judicial and law enforcement leaders to learn about their innovative plan to improve how the criminal justice system handles low-level offenders that have drug or mental health issues.

“I’m currently examining ways Pennsylvania can reform its criminal justice system to benefit society and reduce costs to taxpayers,” DePasquale said. “The comprehensive planning work being done here in York County can serve as a solid example for the entire state.”

DePasquale visited the York County Judicial Center at the invitation of Common Pleas Court Judge Craig Trebilcock, who is working with prosecutors, law enforcement, other county leaders and medical providers to build a case deferral process between the public health system and the criminal justice system.

The goal of the process is to divert low-level, non-violent offenders who have drug addiction or mental health issues into treatment – where they can receive needed help – rather than locking them up. York County has more than two decades of experience in this area, having already implemented drug treatment courts and veterans courts.

DePasquale met with Judge Trebilcock, District Attorney Dave Sunday and other county officials for a discussion about the county’s plan.

One key factor driving the initiative is a sharp rise in drug-related deaths in York County: 173 drug-related deaths were reported in 2017, up from 56 deaths in 2013.

DePasquale, who lives in York, said Pennsylvania should respond to the opioid epidemic by adopting a more strategic approach to intervention and treatment.

“Prison time should be reserved for more serious offenders and those who pose a threat to society,” he said. “The money saved through implementing reforms could be invested in diversionary education and drug-treatment programs, which can reduce recidivism and help past offenders get and stay on track.”

Last month, DePasquale announced plans to develop a [special report](#) focused on criminal justice reform. Learn more about that report and the Department of the Auditor General at www.paauditor.gov.

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