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## **ACPO PRESS RELEASE**

From: Keller J. Blackburn, Athens County Prosecuting Attorney

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

### ***Prosecutor Blackburn Announces Fresh Start Grant for HRS Funding for new program to combat opiate addiction***

Prosecutor Keller Blackburn today announced that the Prosecutor's Fresh Start initiative is helping Health Recovery Services begin an outpatient treatment program to deal with opiate addiction in Athens County. The Prosecutor's Fresh Start fund is providing \$25,000 toward this effort, which is leveraging a total of \$10,000 in additional investments from area law enforcement with the Athens County Sheriff's Office, the Athens Police Department, the Ohio University Police Department and the Nelsonville Police Department each contributing \$2,500 to the new program. The Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board is redirecting \$50,000 in previously allocated money to help kick off the new program.

"We're here today because we're sick of seeing members of our community lose the fight against drug addiction," said Prosecutor Keller Blackburn. "This effort sends a message that law enforcement in our region intends to be part of the solution for those struggling with addiction. We all have a stake in making sure that tools like this are available in our community."

"Law enforcement understands as well as anyone that it takes more than tough enforcement to deal with addiction," said Sheriff Rodney Smith. "We're determined to do everything in our power to seek out and punish dealers of illegal drugs. And we're determined to help those who have fallen victim to these drug traffickers and are now trying to get their lives back together."

The HRS outpatient treatment program will provide in-house, medication-assisted, day-treatment for opiate addiction through the use of Suboxone and Vivitrol. This expands the treatment capacity at HRS, making it possible to maintain daily contact with those recovering from opiate addiction during the critical first weeks and months of recovery. It increases the availability of the drug Vivitrol in Athens County and provides for controlled distribution of the drug Suboxone. More information about current services provided by HRS can be found at [www.hrs.org/](http://www.hrs.org/).

Previously, the Prosecutor's Fresh Start initiative provided \$2,500 to the Clem House in Athens County to provide scholarships to offset the cost for Athens County residents who can't afford to receive recovery services at the facility. More information about Clem House can be found at [www.clemhouse.org/](http://www.clemhouse.org/)

Fresh Start is one component of Prosecutor Blackburn's Community Justice Initiative which also includes: 1)

the Athens County Empowerment Program (ACE) which provides an alternative to prison for certain low level offenders who may benefit from training, treatment and participation in community service; 2) efforts to prevent recidivism by working to help former prisoners successfully reenter their communities; and 3) the Property Crimes Task Force which recognizes that addiction frequently leads to property crimes. The Task Force shares information among law enforcement and educates the public, utilizing former offenders who have been through the system to increase awareness on criminal tactics.

For more information on Prosecutor Blackburn's Community Justice Initiative, you can visit [www.athenscountyprosecutor.org/](http://www.athenscountyprosecutor.org/) and click on the Community Justice tab.

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