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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ATHENS COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE'S HEROIN TREATMENT PROGRAM
EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS**
131 PEOPLE SIGN UP, INCLUDING 58 IN PAST 6 WEEKS ALONE

ATHENS – Athens County Prosecutor Keller Blackburn today announced that the Prosecutor's Office's new Vivitrol program has already exceeded all expectations in treating local individuals suffering from heroin and opiate addiction.

Since the program's inception in September 2015, 131 individuals have sought Vivitrol treatment for addiction. Since the beginning of 2016 – over the past six weeks – 58 people have already signed up for the program. The initial goal was to treat 40 individuals within the first year of the program.

“We've had tremendous support from the community including police departments in Athens, OU and Nelsonville, the Athens County Sheriff's Department and the 317 Board because people down here in Athens County understand that this is a community and regional problem and we have to come together to fight back,” said Prosecutor Blackburn.

Since 2013, with help from state and local funds, the Prosecutor's Office has put together over \$340,000 to help alleviate the local heroin epidemic, and they continue to seek more funding for drug treatment and prevention.

“These are people who are desperate for help. They’ve hit rock bottom and their families are devastated. We believe every dollar spent is going to save lives, prevent deaths and help individuals who are addicted and families in the community,” continued Prosecutor Blackburn.

Vivitrol is a prescription injectable that blocks opioid receptors in the brain and takes away pleasurable feelings associated with heroin or opiate use.

For more information about the Vivitrol treatment program, contact the Prosecutor Office at 740-592-3208.