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WESTERN DISTRICT *of* LOUISIANA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Justice awards grant to Lake Charles District Attorney's Office to fight opioid epidemic

LAKE CHARLES, La. – Acting U.S. Attorney Alexander C. Van Hook announced today that \$400,000 will go to the Lake Charles District Attorney's Office to combat the opioid drug epidemic by funding a drug court.

The Office of Justice Programs awarded the 14th Judicial District Attorney's Office in Lake Charles \$400,000 for Fiscal Year 2017 to enhance funding for adult drug courts and veteran treatment courts. The grant program furthers the Department of Justice's aim to reduce opioid abuse and support law enforcement officers, as well as other justice partners, by providing resources and tools that support prevention of future crime by offenders with addictions.

Of the \$59 million total awarded to various agencies around the country, 22.2 million will go to 53 jurisdictions to support the drug and veterans treatment courts. About \$24 million of the \$59 million in federal grants will be awarded to 50 cities, counties and public health departments to provide financial and technical assistance to state, local and tribal governments to create comprehensive diversion and alternatives to incarceration for those impacted by the opioid epidemic. These funds, awarded under the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance's Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program, also included funds from the Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. An additional \$3.1 million will be awarded by the National Institute of Justice for research and evaluation on drugs and crime. The research priorities are heroin and other opioids and synthetic drugs.

The Department is also awarding more than \$9.5 million under several Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant programs, including the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Grant Program and the Family Drug Court Statewide System Reform Implementation Program. These programs help jurisdictions build effective family drug treatment courts and ensure current juvenile drug treatment courts follow established guidelines.

Specific sites and funds awarded can be found online at: go.usa.gov/xRJWE.

“Today, we are facing the deadliest drug crisis in American history,” said Attorney General Jeff Sessions. “These trends are shocking and the numbers tell us a lot, but they aren’t just numbers. They represent moms and dads, brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends. And make no mistake, combatting this poison is a top priority for President Trump and his administration, and you can be sure that we are taking action to address it. Today we are announcing that we will be awarding millions in federal grants to help law enforcement and public health agencies address prescription drug and opioid abuse. This is an urgent problem, and we are making it a top priority.”

“I want to congratulate the Lake Charles District Attorney’s Office for being awarded this grant,” Van Hook stated. “It will be used to improve the lives of those addicted to drugs and will help reduce the demand for illegal drugs in this district. It is with programs like this in conjunction with law enforcement efforts that we can fight the scourge of opioid abuse.”

Finally, read more about the importance of these programs in a new blog by OJP Acting Assistant Attorney General Alan R. Hanson online at go.usa.gov/xRJBp.

The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Alan R. Hanson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation’s capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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