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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Schimel Appointing Methamphetamine Prosecutor in Response to
Drastic Increase in Wisconsin Drug Cases**

MADISON, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel announced he will be appointing an assistant attorney general to assist local district attorneys and law enforcement in the prosecution of methamphetamine-related cases. In February 2017, Attorney General Schimel briefed the Wisconsin State Legislature on the growing threat of methamphetamine and included findings from a January 2017 joint Wisconsin Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation study. The report details methamphetamine use increased 250 to 300 percent from 2011 to 2015.

“I have hosted listening sessions over the last 12 months with local law enforcement and community leaders in many of Wisconsin’s 72 counties, and there is no doubt meth use is one of the counties’ biggest threats, particularly in the northwestern part of the state,” said Attorney General Schimel. “The vast majority of methamphetamine is not being produced in “one pot” labs in people’s homes, garages, and sheds, but in Mexico, which makes our efforts to put drug traffickers behind bars more important. I’m confident the methamphetamine prosecutor, working alongside our DCI agents and local law enforcement, will have an immediate, positive impact on meth trafficking prosecutions and help reduce some of the burden our resource-strapped counties have been experiencing.”

Recently, the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Bureau (WSCLB) has experienced a 13.5% increase in methamphetamine submissions, from 1,012 in 2015 to 1,149 in 2016. There is also anecdotal evidence that some opiate addicts are switching from the use of prescription drugs and heroin, to methamphetamine.

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“Northwestern Wisconsin is ‘ground zero’ for methamphetamine use,” said Eau Claire County Sheriff Ron Cramer. “I appreciate Attorney General Schimel’s leadership and willingness to assist local law enforcement with this urgent and dangerous threat that is ruining countless lives in our communities.”

Attorney General Schimel announced that the new assistant attorney general will be located in Eau Claire and work in the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI)’s Eau Claire field office. Basing them out of this office will allow them to respond quickly and effectively to cases throughout the northwest part of the state involving methamphetamine trafficking and to work proactively with both DCI criminal agents and outside law enforcement agencies. The new methamphetamine assistant attorney general will represent the state in criminal cases; advise local prosecutors on matters relating to methamphetamine trafficking; and assist in the development of legislation concerning the growing threat that methamphetamine poses to local communities.

More than two years ago, the Attorney General saw the oncoming threat of methamphetamine use in Wisconsin and has since taken the following steps to combat drug abuse.

- Attorney General Schimel hired an analyst at the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center (WSIC) and purchased equipment for investigating meth labs; and is providing training and financial support for the efforts of local law enforcement agencies and multi-jurisdictional drug task forces. Funding for these initiatives comes from a \$1.5 million Methamphetamine Initiative Grant from the United States Department of Justice
- Attorney General Schimel hired four additional criminal investigation agents who are focused on drug interdiction and drug trafficking, the result of [2017 Wisconsin Act 35](#).
- Attorney General Schimel, who was an integral part of the Waukesha County drug treatment court when he was the Waukesha County District Attorney, has advocated for increasing spending on treatment alternative and diversion courts (TAD). Last month, Governor Walker signed 2017 [Wisconsin Act 32](#) into law, which allocates an additional \$2,000,000 to the Wisconsin Department of Justice for drug treatment court grants in Wisconsin counties.
- Last month, Attorney General Schimel successfully sought a stay from the Supreme Court of the United States in *Anderson, et al. v. Loertscher*, a challenge to the state’s Unborn Child Protection Act. The Unborn Child Protection Act or 1997 Wisconsin Act 292 gives state actors the legal authority

to assist substance-addicted, pregnant women with their addiction, thus protecting both the mothers and their unborn children.

- In March, Attorney General Schimel and agents from the Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigation partnered with the Marshfield Clinic on the Northwoods Coalition Methamphetamine Summit in Trego, Wisconsin, to provide training to more than 300 professionals representing a multi-disciplinary team of public safety, public health, drug treatment, and prevention.
- Cynthia Giese, a Special Agent in Charge (SAC) with the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) leads Wisconsin's and the nation's Drug Endangered Children (DEC) program. DEC programs are composed of multi-disciplinary professionals including law enforcement, child protective services, medical providers, prosecutors, school personnel, and corrections officers. All of the professionals play a part in the rescue and support of drug endangered children. The children are provided with services that assist in providing the drug endangered child with a safe environment in which to live and grow up. Each program has a formal Memorandum of Understanding between involved agencies and a protocol that sets out guidelines of what each professional will do when a drug endangered child is identified.