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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Submissions Up Nearly 50%,
AG Schimel Creates Two New Teams of Analysts**

MADISON, Wis. – In response to dramatically higher submissions to the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Bureau (WSCLB) by local law enforcement, Attorney General Brad Schimel announced today the addition of new personnel and the implementation of new processes, in addition to the recent authorization of overtime for all analysts. From 2015 to 2016, submissions increased 49%, following a 31% increase the prior year.

“I’m proud of the crime lab for their commitment to crime victims and local law enforcement and constantly amazed by the work they do and the pace at which they do it, despite a major increase in workload. During my 25-year career as a prosecutor, I know firsthand how important it is to have evidence collected and processed in a manner that will lead to the evidence being admissible in court. Our crime labs always exceeds expectations and taxpayers should be proud that we are handling so much more evidence and so many more cases with no net permanent increase in personnel,” said Attorney General Schimel. “After witnessing the drastic increase in submissions to the crime lab over the prior two and a half years, I am instituting measures to handle the increased demands on the labs. We will continue to monitor the effects of these changes and request additional resources from the legislature, if needed, so there is never a delay in delivering justice to crime victims.”

Since January 2015, DOJ has hosted 187 training events for approximately 10,000 law enforcement officers, support personnel, prosecutors, and victim-witness professionals. Some of these trainings have focused on teaching law enforcement officers in more victim-centered techniques and thus led to an increase in cases requiring DNA analysis. From 2015 to 2016, the DNA Databank Unit handled a 100%

increase of submissions, in part, due to Wisconsin Act 20, widely known as “DNA at Arrest” which went into effect on April 1, 2015. Wisconsin Act 20 implemented the collection of DNA samples from those arrested for certain violent felonies; and upon conviction for all misdemeanor convictions from adults, certain misdemeanor convictions from juveniles, and any felony conviction by any person. In the same time period, the DNA Screening and DNA Analysis Units saw increases of 155% and 12%, respectively.

In addition, as Wisconsin has seen the scourge of the opiate epidemic take hold across the state and witness the alarming resurgence of methamphetamine into nearly every community, submissions to the Controlled Substances Unit also have increased. During the first six months of 2014 there were 3,550 submissions, compared to 3,881 during the first six months of 2017, which is an all-time high for the WSCLB for any six month period.

Despite this influx of submissions and increased workload in both the DNA Unit and Controlled Substances Unit, the WSCLB still completes many cases in days and does so on extremely short notice. For instance, on June 27, 2017, the WSCLB received a request from the Madison Police Department to analyze evidence recovered at the scene of a suspected homicide and robbery that took place earlier that morning at a Culver’s restaurant in Madison. The DNA analysis was completed and a DNA profile was identified using the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s DNA database, also known as the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) in just 72 hours. The CODIS match was reported to the Madison Police Department and led to an arrest shortly thereafter.

“I can’t express how grateful I am to our partners at the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory,” said Madison Police Chief Michael Koval. “Owing to their dedication and to their understanding of the urgency of the Culver’s homicide case, they understood immediately the dire implications in this case and triaged their other workload to accommodate our urgent pleas. But for the Crime Lab’s findings, I seriously doubt whether we would have been able to identify these serious criminal offenders who were also implicated in other heinous crimes. I am a true believer in the Wisconsin State Crime Lab and their dedicated staff.”

In addition to its laboratory work, the WSCLB also provides technical assistance at crime scenes by deploying its Crime Scene Response Teams (CSRT) to collect evidence. In fact, over the last 24 hours, all three DOJ labs have deployed their CSRT to crime scenes. In 2016, the WSCLB responded to 88 calls for assistance from local law enforcement, which included 23 responses to officer involved shooting (OIS) investigation scenes. Thus far in 2017, the WSCLB has responded to 18 OIS investigation scenes. Despite a 232% increase in calls from 2014 to 2016, the WSCLB

has never declined a request for assistance by local law enforcement. In order to supplement the work of the CSRT, Attorney General Schimel is creating five additional CSRT positions. Currently, when analysts respond to calls as a member of the CSRT, they are pulled off of their analytical work at the crime lab and away from their regular workload. Once they return from a crime scene, they must catalog evidence from the crime scene, restock inventory used, and draft related reports. The new CSRT members will assist analysts with much of this ancillary work so that the analysts can spend more time on their regular case load.

Attorney General Schimel is also creating a dedicated forensic biologist team, made up of six biologists, to assist the DNA Analysis Unit, one of the lab's busiest units. The DNA Analysis Unit determines if biological matter or fluid exists on evidence and if so, develops a genetic profile from it. Currently, DNA analysts spend significant amounts of time on a single piece of evidence, beginning from the moment the evidence is received until the analysis is complete. Best practices throughout the nation show that this process can be streamlined by using dedicated forensic biologists at the beginning of the process. These biologists document evidence, determine the existence of biological evidence, and prepare the sample for testing, which allows the DNA analysts more time for the actual scientific evaluation and analysis.

Also, in the face of the ever-shifting fight against synthetic drugs and fentanyl, and to assist law enforcement in quickly identifying unknown powders, Attorney General Schimel has directed the WSCLB to allow law enforcement officers to perform any necessary field testing at the WSCLB, instead of at uncontrolled locations, such as a crime scene or inside of a local law enforcement agency's evidence storage room.

The WSCLB, made up of more than 180 criminal justice professionals, operates laboratories in Milwaukee, Madison, and Wausau. The crime laboratories in Madison and Milwaukee are full service labs providing analysis in Controlled Substances, Toxicology, DNA/Serology, Latent Prints/Footwear, and Forensic Imaging. In addition, the Madison lab houses the State DNA Databank and the Milwaukee lab provides analyses in Firearms/Tool marks and Trace Chemistry. All three laboratories provide crime scene field response for local law enforcement agencies.