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PRESS RELEASE

September 25, 2015

**RE: COMMONWEALTH V. CHRISTOPHER VANNUCCI
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Joint Statement of Office of District Attorney and Lycoming County Prison on the Arrest of Correctional Officer Christopher Vannucci

Christopher Vannucci, 28, 2671 Bubb Street, Duboistown, is scheduled to be arraigned at 10:00 this morning before District Justice Allen Page on charges of Conspiracy, Contraband and Delivery of Controlled Substances as a result of an allegation that the former Lycoming County Correctional Officer delivered Methadone, Oxycodone and Xanax to an inmate at the Lycoming County Prison.

The Lycoming County Prison first learned of the alleged incident on July 21, 2015, after prison officials received credible information from an inmate. The prison immediately notified Detectives from the Lycoming County District Attorney's Office who commenced a criminal investigation. The Lycoming County Prison also commenced an internal investigation that same day.

The prison conducted cell searches and performed urinalyses on inmates in potentially affected areas. No pills of any type were found, and no inmate tested positive for Oxycodone, Methadone, Xanax, or any other opiate, benzodiazepine, or prescription medication.

However, both the internal prison investigation and criminal investigation quickly revealed information which corroborated the initial inmate report. Vannucci was subsequently relieved of duty and suspended pending the outcome of the investigations. Recorded inmate telephone calls and witness interviews established that while working as a correctional officer, Vannucci was directed by an inmate to obtain Methadone, Oxycodone and Xanax from the inmate's girlfriend. It is alleged that on July 9, 2015, Vannucci introduced the drugs into the prison and delivered them to the inmate. Vannucci was paid \$100 to complete the delivery.

On July 31, 2015, at the request of the County Prison, multiple members of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections K-9 Drug Interdiction Unit conducted an intensive search of the entire prison facility. No drugs, pills, or illegal substances of any kind were found.

On August 27, 2015, while the internal investigation was still ongoing and while he was on unpaid suspension, Vannucci resigned from his employment with Lycoming County Prison. Vannucci had been in full-time non-probationary status for less than one month when these events were discovered. Vannucci had successfully completed training at the prison, Basic Training conducted at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Training Academy in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and had completed the probationary period which applies to all new correctional officers.

Although the criminal investigation remains ongoing, there is no evidence at this time that any other correctional staff at the County Prison is involved in the misconduct, or that Vannucci introduced the drugs into the prison on more than one occasion.

“Lycoming County Prison takes illicit drugs, inmate safety, staff safety and security issues with the utmost seriousness,” Warden Kevin Deparlos said. “After a thorough investigation, all of the evidence suggests that this was an isolated incident which occurred on only this one occasion. There is no evidence whatsoever that any other prison employee was involved, or that Vannucci had engaged in the same or similar conduct on any day other than July 9, 2015. Prison officials learned of the incident less than two weeks after it occurred and took prompt and deliberate action. Lycoming County Prison has and will continue to have zero tolerance for any misconduct,” Deparlos added.

“The assistance and dedication of the staff at the Lycoming County Prison was instrumental in bringing this incident to light and in furthering the subsequent investigation,” District Attorney Eric Linhardt said.

Lycoming County Prison officials greatly appreciate the immediate response and exhaustive investigation led by District Attorney Eric R. Linhardt and County Detective Stephen J. Sorage.