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WHYY Partners with Fellow Pennsylvania Public Television Stations to Fight Opioid Crisis

(March 23, 2018) **Pennsylvania's Public Television** stations will join the state's efforts to fight the opioid and heroin epidemic, by airing programs which inform and provide resources. On March 29 at 9:00 p.m. all seven of **Pennsylvania's Public Television** stations including WHYY will air *Broken: Women • Families • Opioids* – a compelling new documentary from WQED Multimedia in Pittsburgh.

Broken: Women • Families • Opioids makes the argument that opioid addiction among women has implications, which go far beyond the addict, infecting the entire family, especially children. In *Broken: Women • Families • Opioids* we meet children who are born addicted, while others are removed from their homes and placed in foster care or in the care of an extended family member.

"It's not enough to simply report on topics like the opioid crisis without talking about the people who rely on these medications to live productive lives as well as those who are affected when needs lead to abuse," said WHYY President & CEO William Marrazzo.

Pennsylvania's drug overdose rate is more than twice the national average and it continues to rise. In 2016, 4,627 Pennsylvanians died from drug overdoses. That's up from 3,264 fatal overdoses in Pennsylvania in 2015 – and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has just reported that there were 5,260 drug overdose deaths in Pennsylvania for the 12-month period leading up to May 2017.

"WHYY has been committed to covering all aspects of this problem and seeking solutions through our various news programs like *Radio Times* and *The Pulse* as well as online," said Marrazzo. "Expanding on the robust work already done by bringing this issue to our television audience is another way WHYY is adapting to changing needs by revealing valuable stories that unlock access to resources."

In addition to *Broken: Women • Families • Opioids*, many of **Pennsylvania's Public Television** stations will schedule related programming including *Hooked Rx: From Prescription to Addiction*, *Understanding the Opioid Epidemic*, and *Frontline: Chasing Heroin*. In Harrisburg, WITF Public Media's Emmy award winning news and information series, *Health Smart*, will focus its resources on Pennsylvania's opioid crisis.

And because the crest of this crisis is still in the future, **Pennsylvania's Public Television** stations have committed their resources to producing a year-long quarterly



series called *Battling Opioids*. The new series will focus on solutions, and provide help and resources for the addict and their families.

In September ***Pennsylvania's Public Television*** stations will devote an entire week of primetime programming to focus on the commonwealth's opioid crisis. The centerpiece of the week will be a single statewide broadcast featuring medical, social service, and clerical professionals along with recovering addicts and their families discussing solutions for Pennsylvania's opioid addiction. Viewers will be able to call in to ask questions, get answers and get connected to help.

WHYY enriches the lives of people in our community through news, arts, education and civic dialogue. We are the region's leading PBS/ NPR member station, and hundreds of thousands of people access our programs and services through television, radio and award winning online properties, including the all new WHYY.org. We also offer more than 75 forums, events, lectures and media education ABOUT programs each year.

