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Press Release

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Assistant to the Secretary Anne Hazlett Statement on Prescribed to Death Opioid Memorial

(Washington, D.C., April 17, 2018) – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett visited the Prescribed to Death opioid memorial today at President’s Park. The exhibit features 22,000 pills memorializing the 22,000 Americans who died of a prescription drug overdose in 2016.

Hazlett issued the following statement:

“Over the course of the last year, I have seen firsthand the impact of the opioid epidemic on rural America. From east to west, this issue is devastating rural families and creating tremendous stress on local leaders in small towns and rural places. However, in the face of this darkness, I have also been inspired and encouraged by the transformative power of this challenge. I have seen that for some communities, the tragedy of this issue has become a powerful catalyst for broader change – bringing leaders together to tackle difficult and underlying challenges upstream. With a renewed focus on the power of community, these places are reclaiming their identity and casting a new vision for the future built on prosperity. In that transformation, I find great hope and a huge opportunity for a bright future in rural America.”

At the direction of President Trump, The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been keenly focused on addressing the opioid crisis in rural communities. So far, the Department has [convened regional roundtables](#) to hear firsthand accounts of the impact of the crisis and effective strategies for response in rural communities; [launched a webpage](#) on opioid misuse in rural America featuring resources for rural communities and individuals facing the crisis; and [prioritized investments in two key grant programs to address the crisis in rural places](#). For more information about these efforts, visit the USDA rural opioid misuse webpage at www.usda.gov/opioids.

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