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***For Immediate Release***

**TOMS RIVER TOWNSHIP HIRES OUTSIDE LEGAL COUNSEL  
TO TACKLE OPIOID EPIDEMIC**

**TOMS RIVER TOWNSHIP (Aug. 24, 2017)** –The Toms River Township Council announced today that it has selected Motley Rice LLC, one of the nation’s largest plaintiffs law firms, along with D’Arcy Johnson Day, a New Jersey litigation law firm with an office in Toms River, to serve as counsel to assist the township and its leadership in combatting the opioid crisis.

“It is no surprise that our township has a major problem. In Ocean County alone, the death rate related to opioid overdoses exceeds the number of treatment beds available. We are in dire need of resources to implement a multi-faceted approach to battle this issue,” said Mayor Thomas F. Kelaher. “Working now with Motley Rice and D’Arcy Johnson Day, we can determine the most impactful and appropriate legal way to tackle this public health crisis, including seeking to hold those accountable who caused this devastating epidemic.”

**Opioid Impact in Toms River Township**

- Ocean County averages one overdose death every two days.
- More than half of Toms River residents admitted for substance abuse treatment in 2016 were admitted for opioid/heroin issues. (742 out of 1,284).
- Toms River had a 51 percent increase in heroin abuse treatment cases from 2014 to 2015.
- Ocean County had the second highest total of overdose deaths in New Jersey in 2015 (totaling 157). In 2016, that number rose to more than 200 overdose deaths. Fentanyl is driving the increase.

“Too many Toms River residents and their families continue to be affected by drug use and unintentional overdoses,” said Councilwoman Maria Maruca. “The opioid epidemic must be treated like the public health crisis that it is, one that is tearing apart families and communities.”

“The Toms River County Council and Mayor Kelaher recognize that they must take dramatic action to bring critical aid, treatment and other resources into the community to combat the opioid crisis,” said Motley Rice LLC co-founder Joe Rice. “We are ready to hit the ground running to help Toms River. It is only through strong leadership and an all-around approach that real change can happen. It is our hope that others continue to recognize the dire need for solutions, as Toms River is doing,” commented partner Andrew D’Arcy of D’Arcy Johnson Day.

“The Council believes this is a step in the right direction in helping to stem the tide of opioid abuse in Toms River Township, the opioid epidemic has touched virtually every New Jerseyan and defies simple, one-size fits all solutions,” said Councilman-at-Large George Wittmann.

As an EMS Coordinator, Councilman Kevin Geoghegan said unfortunately he helps fight the epidemic by treating patients suffering from overdoses every day. “Opioid overdose is a widespread problem that will take the entire community to bring about real change. I applaud our Governing Body for passing this resolution to explore the bigger picture of the opioid problem.”

Council President Al Manforti said its time that drug manufacturers be held accountable for their actions. “The health and welfare of our citizens must become more important than profits and market shares. With overdose numbers at alarming rates, it remains clear that we must combat addiction on several fronts.”

“With overdose deaths from opioids at 49 in Toms River in 2016, we must address this issue with all the tools at our disposal,” said Councilman Brian Kubiel.

Motley Rice attorneys gained recognition for their pioneering asbestos lawsuits, their work with the State Attorneys General in the landmark litigation against Big Tobacco, and their representation of 9/11 families in the ongoing lawsuit against terrorist financiers. The firm’s dedicated team working on the opioid litigation is led by former Washington, D.C., Attorney General Linda Singer and Motley Rice co-founder Joe Rice. Motley Rice is actively working with cities, states and counties to help combat the opioid epidemic. Santa Clara County, represented by Linda Singer, filed the first complaint in the current wave of opioid litigation in 2013. Motley Rice continues to represent Santa Clara County and now represents the City of Chicago, State of Alaska, State of New Hampshire, State of South Carolina, Albany County, New York and Summit County, Ohio in similar litigation or investigations relating to alleged deceptive marketing of highly addictive opioid prescription painkillers. Motley Rice has partnered with the New Jersey litigation law firm, D’Arcy Johnson Day, to handle the opioid litigation in New Jersey.

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