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Governor Deval Patrick

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GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES INSPECTOR GENERAL GLENN CUNHA TO TAKE OVER DRUG LAB REVIEW

With support of prosecutors and defense bar leaders, Cunha will be responsible for independent review of Hinton drug lab practices and operations

BOSTON – Monday, November 5, 2012 – Governor Deval Patrick today announced that Inspector General Glenn Cunha will take over the review of the Hinton Drug Laboratory's operations from the Attorney General's Office. The Governor called for an independent assessment of the drug lab to complement the ongoing criminal and central office investigations into chemist Annie Dookhan's wrongdoing and to determine whether the lab's failures are limited to Dookhan and her supervisors and managers, all of whom have been removed from their positions.

"Inspector General Cunha brings the necessary independence and experience to the task and enjoys the support of both prosecutors and the defense bar," said Governor Patrick. "I look forward to his findings."

"The integrity and credibility of the criminal justice system require a comprehensive and thorough review of the drug lab," said Inspector General Cunha. "My office is prepared to conduct such a review and to that end, I have already begun to assemble an experienced team to examine the lab's operations, paying particular attention to its policies and procedures."

"The Massachusetts Bar Association applauds Governor Patrick for his quick and decisive action in appointing Inspector General Cunha to conduct an independent investigation of the drug lab," said Martin Healy, Chief Legal Counsel to the Massachusetts Bar Association. "We are pleased that the Governor has selected the Inspector General, who has the experience and strong investigatory tools at hand to thoroughly examine the matter."

Inspector General Cunha will begin his work immediately. He plans to combine current staff and investigatory resources with the retention of independent forensic experts to determine whether potential failures at the drug lab impact cases beyond those handled directly by Dookhan. Alongside this review, Attorney David Meier is leading the central office the Governor established and is working collaboratively with prosecutors, defense attorneys, the courts, and other impacted agencies to oversee the identification of defendants whose cases may have been adversely affected by Dookhan. Meier has identified upwards of 1,900 cases to date, and has been sharing that information with prosecutors and defense attorneys so that they can make informed decisions about each defendant.

The IG's review and the central office are among the series of responsive and corrective steps the Administration has taken since Dookhan admitted to law enforcement that she mishandled evidence toward the end of her nine-year career. The Governor ordered the lab's immediate closure on August 29 and since then the Administration has been in regular contact with effected parties, urging collaboration and reiterating the Governor's commitment to preventing potential miscarriages of justice, assigning accountability and restoring integrity to the drug lab's work. The Massachusetts State Police are now responsible for all state drug sample testing and the Administration has filed a supplemental funding request with the Legislature to cover costs associated with case review, court hearings, public safety programs and other efforts to respond to the drug lab's failures.

Prior to being named Inspector General in July, Cunha served as Chief of the Insurance & Unemployment Fraud Division and Managing Attorney of the Criminal Bureau in the Attorney General's Office. In the latter role, he oversaw the management of eight divisions, supervised division chiefs and worked closely with the State Police Detectives Unit assigned to the Attorney General's Office. He supervised investigations and prosecutions relative to financial fraud, probation, lottery, fraudulently-produced MBTA passes, human trafficking, child pornography and a case of complex fraud by a charity organization. At the same time, Cunha also managed a caseload of public corruption matters, including investigations of the Middlesex Sheriff's Department, Medford Housing Authority, and Chelsea Housing Authority.

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