



# BCPO News

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## **Massachusetts Man Receives Prison Time for Possessing Large Quantity of Fentanyl**

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a 24-year-old Massachusetts man was sentenced today to five years in New Jersey state prison for attempting to transport a significant amount of fentanyl through the Garden State early last year.

Walkyns Valentin-Cruz, of Lawrence, Mass., was sentenced to five years in New Jersey state prison after pleading guilty in May to Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute (Second Degree). New Jersey's criminal code presently contains no first-degree charge that can be applied to fentanyl.

Valentin-Cruz was pulled over by a Maple Shade police officer on Route 73 on April 3, 2018 and found to be in possession of suspected narcotics. The results of a laboratory analysis revealed that the package, which was discovered in the glove compartment, contained nearly a kilogram of fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is 80 to 100 times more potent, according to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration. It is added to heroin to increase its potency, and sometimes disguised as highly-potent heroin. Many users believe they are purchasing heroin and are unaware they are buying fentanyl instead, which often results in fatal overdoses.

One kilogram is enough to kill approximately 400,000 people.

"Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths," Prosecutor Coffina said. "The great work performed by the Maple Shade Police Department removed a significant amount of this deadly poison from the street, likely saving numerous lives."

*All persons are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

**END**

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