



BCPO News

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Cinnaminson Drug Dealer Charged in Death of Medford Township Man Who Fatally Overdosed

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina and Medford Township Police Chief Art Waterman announced that a 19-year-old Cinnaminson Township drug dealer has been charged with causing the death of a Medford Township teenager who fatally overdosed in his home early last year on counterfeit prescription drugs that contained fentanyl.

Zachary DiBattista, of the 500 block of Camelot Court, was charged earlier this month with Strict Liability for Drug-Induced Death (First Degree). He was taken into custody Wednesday by the U.S. Marshals Service New York/New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force, with assistance from the Camden and Atlantic City divisions. The Burlington County Sheriff's Department is a member of the task force and participated in the apprehension.

He was lodged in the Burlington County Jail in Mount Holly pending a detention hearing in Superior Court.

The investigation began on March 6, 2021, after officers from the Medford Township Police Department were dispatched to a Yorkshire Drive home for a report of an unattended death. Upon arrival, officers found the body of Max Mather, 18, in his bedroom.

Burlington County Medical Examiner Dr. Ian Hood determined that Mather died from fentanyl toxicity. The toxicology report also noted the presence of Xylazine, an animal tranquilizer not approved for human use.

The investigation revealed that Mather fatally overdosed on pills he had purchased from DiBattista a day earlier at a Marlton convenience store during a meeting that was arranged on Snapchat. The investigation further revealed that Mather was purchasing what he believed to be Oxycontin pills, when in reality he was provided with counterfeit controlled prescription drugs (CPDs) containing fentanyl that were designed to resemble authentic oxycodone 30 mg tablets.

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The counterfeit CPDs are blue and are stamped with “M-30.” They tend to be off-color from legitimate tablets, can be speckled and are easier to crush. Most important, they commonly contain fentanyl, which can be 50 times stronger than heroin, meaning those who take them are unaware of the potentially lethal consequences.

“One of the most tragic aspects of the unrelenting substance use disorder epidemic is how young overdose victims tend to be,” Prosecutor Coffina said. “In this case, the victim was only 18 and still in high school, with his whole life ahead of him. He presumably thought he was taking a prescription drug that would not harm him, and it is nearly impossible for the untrained eye to distinguish a ‘real’ Oxycontin pill from a counterfeit one. To avoid similar tragedies, we need to do everything possible to make sure our children (and adults) understand that there is no such thing as a ‘safe’ prescription drug unless prescribed by a licensed professional and supplied by a licensed pharmacy.”

The case was investigated by the Prosecutor’s Office Gang, Gun and Narcotics Task Force (GGNTF) and the Medford Township Police Department.

DiBattista will be prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Michael Angermeier, supervisor of the BCPO GGNTF.

For more information on counterfeit CPDs, visit <https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/DIR-035-20%20Counterfeit%20Controlled%20Prescription%20Drug%20Availability%20in%20Pennsylvania%20and%20Delaware%20%28Unclassified%29.pdf>.

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

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