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HATBORO WOMAN CHARGED WITH “DRUG DELIVERY RESULTING IN DEATH” IN WILLOW GROVE FATAL OVERDOSE ON NOV. 6



NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Dec. 9, 2016) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Upper Moreland Township Police Chief S. Michael Murphy announce the arrest of Gwendolyn Marie Prebish, 27, of Hatboro on the criminal homicide charge of Drug Delivery Resulting in Death and Involuntary Manslaughter in the Nov. 6, 2016, overdose death of Michael Pastorino, 32, of Willow Grove.

The investigation by Upper Moreland Township Police and the Montgomery County Detective Bureau revealed that the night before Mr. Pastorino was found dead in his bedroom, he had sent and received drug-related text messages with his heroin supplier, who said she would deliver four bags of purported heroin to his residence.

An autopsy by the Montgomery County Coroner's Office determined that the cause of Mr. Pastorino's death was not heroin but was the even deadlier drug fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 40 to 50 times more deadly than street-level heroin. Testing on the drug bags recovered near Mr. Pastorino's body found that they contained fentanyl.

The investigation revealed that Prebish was the victim's dealer. Prebish is charged with Drug Delivery Resulting in Death, which is a felony criminal homicide charge that could result in a sentence of up to 40 years—a similar penalty to third-degree murder. She is also charged with Involuntary Manslaughter.

"You give a drug to someone and they die as a result of the drug, you are on the hook for Drug Delivery Resulting in Death," said Steele. "Drug dealers need to know that they are killing people, and they will be held criminally responsible. Michael Pastorino died by someone poisoning him with this very deadly drug—fentanyl.

"Too many people are dying, and it's because of this heroin and fentanyl epidemic. Addicts do not know that what they are injecting is the much more powerful fentanyl since it looks practically identical to heroin. But when it hits their system, the fentanyl shuts down their body, and they die."

Prebish was arraigned Dec. 8, 2016 before Magisterial District Judge Paul N. Leo. Bail was set at \$1 million, and the defendant was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing was set for 11 a.m. on Dec. 21, 2016, before Judge Leo.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kathleen McLaughlin, the Captain of the Drug Unit.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele

CRIMINAL CHARGES, AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.