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TRAVIS SIUTA OF EAST NORRITON CHARGED WITH DRUG DELIVERY RESULTING IN DEATH IN FATAL OVERDOSE



NORRISTOWN, Pa. (July 26, 2017) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, East Norriton Township Police Chief Karyl J. Kates and Plymouth Township Police Chief Joseph F. Lawrence announce the arrest of Travis Siuta, 29, of East Norriton, on the criminal homicide charge of Drug Delivery Resulting in Death in the May 6, 2017, overdose death of Ciara Hadrick, 30, of Norristown.

East Norriton Township Police responded to Einstein Medical Center on West Germantown Pike at 3:45 a.m. on May 6 to a reported overdose death of a patient. A nurse had found the patient, Ms. Hadrick, around 2:30 a.m., unresponsive in the bathroom of to her hospital room. Attempts to revive Ms. Hadrick were unsuccessful, and she was pronounced dead at 3:06 a.m. Two empty, blue wax-style bags were found under the body, and one blue wax-style bag containing a white powdery substance was found in her clothing. This packaging is the type commonly used for packaging heroin. Drug paraphernalia was also found.

The ensuing investigation by the Montgomery County Detective Bureau's Narcotics Enforcement Team revealed that earlier in the evening, at 11:49 p.m., May 5, 2017, the defendant signed the hospital's "After Hours Sign-In Log" as a visitor to Ms. Hadrick's room. His arrival and departure eight minutes later were captured on hospital surveillance video. Through text messaging records, detectives determined that Siuta delivered three bags of purported heroin to Ms. Hadrick that evening. The investigation also found that it was Siuta's fifth drug delivery to the deceased's hospital room during her stay, each of which were arranged by text messages and the defendant's arrival and departure from the hospital were captured on video surveillance. Einstein Medical Center administrators and security personnel fully cooperated with the investigation.

National Medical Services (NMS) tested the bags recovered from the deceased's hospital room and found them to contain fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 40 to 50 times stronger than street-level heroin. An autopsy by the Montgomery County Chief Deputy Coroner Gregory McDonald determined that the cause of Ms. Hadrick's death was accidental overdose by fentanyl.

Siuta is charged with Drug Delivery Resulting in Death, a felony criminal homicide charge that could result in a sentence of up to 40 years—a penalty similar to third-degree murder—as well as Possession With Intent to Deliver, Criminal Use of a Communication Facility, Recklessly Endangering Another Person and Possession of a Controlled Substance.

"Ciara Hadrick died from being poisoned while in a hospital, surrounded by people trying to help her. And this dealer hand delivers poison to her bedside five times, including in the middle of the night. Dealers peddling their poison—delivering right to the victim's door—and preying upon those suffering from the disease of addiction should think twice about doing so in Montgomery County," said Steele. "I want to be loud and clear again with this message: if you deal drugs like pills, heroin or fentanyl and we can prove that the drugs you sold caused someone's death, you will be charged with homicide—Drug Delivery Resulting in Death. This is our fourth arrest for this charge in 2017, and I can assure you that more arrests will be coming. Our law enforcement agencies are working together to combat this terrible epidemic, and we are committed to stemming the tide of the pain, suffering, addiction and death that those who traffic poison are raining down on our county and bringing into all of our lives."

Siuta was arraigned today before Magisterial District Judge Ester J. Casillo. Bail was denied, and the defendant was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is set for 10 a.m., Aug. 9, 2017, before Judge Casillo.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Tonya Lupinacci.

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.