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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DRUG TRANSPORTER ARRESTED IN UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP CARRYING FIVE KILOS OF FENTANYL WORTH MORE THAN \$1.6 MILLION



JORGE VALDEZ-ROSAS

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Feb. 3, 2023) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent in Charge Thomas Hodnett, Upper Merion Township Director of Public Safety Thomas Nolan and Liberty Mid-Atlantic High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Executive Director Jeremiah A. Daley announce the arrest of Jorge Valdez-Rosas, 22, of San Luis, Arizona, on charges related to trafficking fentanyl. At the time of his arrest, the defendant was in possession of five kilograms of fentanyl with a street value of more than \$1.6 million.

The investigation into Valdez-Rosas began when law enforcement authorities received information that a drug trafficking organization operating in both Mexico and the United States was in the process of smuggling kilogram quantities of fentanyl from Mexico into the United States. Law enforcement learned that part of the kilos of fentanyl were destined for Upper Merion Township in Montgomery County.

A joint investigation involving members of DEA Task Force Group 51, Upper Merion Police and the Montgomery County Detective Bureau, which is part of the Liberty

Mid-Atlantic HIDTA, learned that Valdez-Rosas had traveled to Montgomery County in possession of kilogram quantities of fentanyl. On Jan. 31, 2023, while acting on the information received, law enforcement established surveillance at a hotel in Upper Merion Township and observed Valdez-Rosas arrive in possession of a large duffel bag. After conducting overnight surveillance on Valdez-Rosas, he was observed exiting his hotel room on Feb. 1, 2023, carrying the large duffel bag. A search of Valdez-Rosas' duffel bag resulted in the seizure of five kilograms of fentanyl, which field tested positive. Evidence obtained in the investigation revealed Valdez-Rosas was communicating via cellphone, specifically to orchestrate a meeting to deliver the fentanyl to a third party, on behalf of others.

“Five kilograms, or 5,000 grams of fentanyl, is a very significant quantity of fentanyl, with a street value of more than \$1.6 million,” said DA Steele. “This quantity of drugs equates to approximately 166,666 individual doses of fentanyl, and by intercepting this delivery of fentanyl into our communities, we have saved countless lives by preventing significant fatal overdoses.”

HIDTA's Daley pointed out the importance of the collaborative law enforcement efforts in investigating drug trafficking. “This seizure and arrest thwarted the delivery of thousands of doses of deadly poison into the region's drug supply. As the HIDTA program seeks to reduce supplies of illegal drugs, and disrupt the organizations trafficking them, the cooperative efforts of the Montgomery County DA's detectives, the DEA-Philadelphia, and Upper Merion Police in this investigation are right in line with our goals and that of the National Drug Control Strategy.”

This investigation involved the use of electronic surveillance to capture communications of the persons involved in a conspiracy to import and deliver large quantities of fentanyl in the United States, which included Valdez-Rosas.

Valdez-Rosas was arrested on charges of Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance—Fentanyl, Conspiracy and Criminal Use of a Communications Facility. He was arraigned by Magisterial District Judge Marc Alfarano, who set bail at \$250,000 cash, with a Nebbia condition. Following a bail review hearing on Feb. 2, 2023, Court of Common Pleas Judge Steven T. O'Neill raised the bail to \$500,000 cash and kept all conditions in place. Valdez-Rosas was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 10:30 a.m., Feb. 15, 2023, in front of Magisterial District Judge James P. Gallagher.

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.