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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 9, 2023

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**District Attorney McMahon, Special Narcotics
Prosecutor Brennan, NYPD, Staten Island Borough
President Fossella, and Behavioral Health Community
Providers Warn Staten Islanders of Dangers of Fentanyl
on National Fentanyl Awareness Day**

Fentanyl is present in over 80% of all fatal overdoses on Staten Island and is the leading cause in the nationwide spike in overdose deaths in the past several years, with over 100,000 Americans succumbing to overdose in 2021 and 2022.

On Tuesday, May 9th, Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon, joined by New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan, Staten Island Borough President Vito J. Fossella, the NYPD, and representatives of Staten Island's treatment and recovery community marked **National Fentanyl Awareness Day**, a nationwide effort to warn Americans about the horrific dangers of deadly fentanyl and its analogs.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50-100 times more potent than heroin or prescription opioid pills, and is mixed into nearly all of the heroin, and now many other drugs, currently for sale on the black market. Its presence on Staten Island and across the country has spiked exponentially in the past several years, and the deadliness of this drug has led law enforcement,

elected leaders, and treatment providers to come together to warn those battling addiction that fentanyl is not to be taken lightly.

“In 2015, fentanyl was present in just 15% of fatal overdoses on Staten Island, but by 2020 it was found in nearly 80% of all fatal overdoses. Fentanyl and its analogs claim the lives of hundreds of Staten Islanders, thousands of New Yorkers, and tens of thousands of Americans every year,” **said District Attorney McMahon.** “The source of so much death and destruction deserves an urgent, strong, and wholistic response, that brings to bear every level and facet of government, the behavioral health and treatment community, and law enforcement to stem the tide of this plague. It is long overdue that our nation treat fentanyl and its analogs as the existential threat they are to our loved ones and our community.”

District Attorney McMahon continued, “For the past eight years, my dedicated team of prosecutors, investigators, and treatment and recovery professionals have worked around the clock to root out these deadly drugs, prosecute those who peddle them for profit, and aid those struggling with addiction illness. But the power and ubiquity of fentanyl and fentanyl analogs on the street today make this fight increasingly difficult, and yet, more important than ever. On this Fentanyl Awareness Day, I ask all Staten Islanders to do their part and learn about this terrible drug, to raise their voices and advocate to their elected officials about the urgency of this crisis and the need for smart policies and funding to make and impact, and to steer those they know who struggle with substance use disorder to the wealth of treatment and support options available to them on Staten Island. Help is one call away, and we urge everyone struggling to do so before it is too late.”

In 2017, District Attorney McMahon launched **SIHOPE.org** and the **Staten Islanders Against Drug Abuse** public awareness campaign to provide a one-stop-shop for anyone battling addiction and their loved ones to access critical information and help. The website continues to serve as a resource for those in need.

“Staten Islanders have experienced considerable loss and heartbreak as a result of the opioid epidemic. The borough was significantly impacted by the abuse of prescription pills at the outset of the crisis. Substance use issues have since taken different forms, but the devastation continues. Fentanyl is the most deadly opioid that we have seen yet, and it has deeply affected many families on Staten Island. I commend District Attorney Michael McMahon and his staff for their commitment to addressing the opioid epidemic since the DA first took office,” **said New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan.**

“Above all else, the fight against illegal drugs is about saving lives,” **said NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell.**

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NYPD Commissioner Sewell continued, “And the drastic increase in fentanyl use in our city tragically illustrates exactly what is at stake here. This poison is shockingly deadly, and the NYPD will continue to work closely with our elected officials, community leaders, and law enforcement partners to ensure that all the people we serve understand and avoid its dangers.”

“The statistics of fatal fentanyl overdoses are startling -- and behind those numbers are the faces of mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters. Sadly, countless Staten Island families know all too well the heartbreak of losing a loved one to this silent killer. I want to thank District Attorney McMahon for standing at the forefront to raise awareness of this urgent and deadly public health crisis,” **said Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella.**

“With the ever-increasing presence of fentanyl and other deadly additives in the drug supply, we must redouble our efforts to do everything in our power to educate and mobilize to save the lives our family members, friends, and neighbors,” **said Diane Arneth, Executive Director of Community Health Action Staten Island (CHASI).**

“Since the advent of fentanyl in the illegal drug supply, overdoses and deaths have climbed over 300% national, and claimed the lives of nearly 1,000 Staten Islanders, this includes adolescents and youth as young as age 9. Via our partner network, over thousands of doses of Narcan and fentanyl test strips have been distributed each year to prevent further tragedies,” **said Joseph Conte, Executive Director of Staten Island Performing Provider System (SI PPS).**

Joseph Conte continued, “The work of our District Attorney, NYPD, and EMS have saved countless lives and we salute their brave efforts. Reducing the stigma association with substance use disorder is critical as is prevention efforts in every school for every age student. The SI PPS network provides service to over 20,000 Staten Islanders affected by substance use disorder annually.”

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