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Contact Communications

Phone (850) 245-0150



Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Takedown of Massive Central Florida Drug Trafficking Organization; Highlights SAFE Grant Program Success

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier’s Office of Statewide Prosecution is charging 19 individuals involved in a massive drug trafficking organization selling fentanyl throughout Central Florida. Attorney General Uthmeier, Florida Department of Law Enforcement Assistant Commissioner Lee Massey, and Orange County Sheriff John Mina announced the takedown of the criminal group at a news conference in Orlando this morning. The Office of Statewide Prosecution charged the defendants with trafficking in fentanyl, trafficking in cocaine, conspiracy to traffic in fentanyl, and conspiracy to traffic in cocaine.

“There are swift consequences for those who commit crimes in Florida, and we will support law enforcement in the fight to keep deadly fentanyl off our streets,” said **Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “This operation was successful due to the SAFE Grant program, which provides additional state funding to local law enforcement to conduct investigations and combat illicit fentanyl activity. These operations save lives, and SAFE Grants are vital to these efforts.”

The joint FDLE and OCSO investigation uncovered the 19 group members selling fentanyl and cocaine throughout the Central Florida area. Authorities seized six pounds of fentanyl and four pounds of cocaine, worth a total of \$1.5 million.

The operation was funded in part by Florida’s SAFE grant program. SAFE grants provide assistance to local law enforcement agencies conducting investigations designed to combat illicit fentanyl activity. The grant provides reimbursement for approved fentanyl-related investigative operations. To learn more, click [here](#).

In the past year, the SAFE Grant Program has resulted in more than 1,500 arrests and the seizure of more than 170 kilograms of fentanyl and more than 57,000 fentanyl pills.

The following defendants have been arrested by authorities: Juan Carlos Oquendo, Luis Perez Guzman, Kendrick Butler, Jose Rodriguez, Wilfredo Hernandez, Denniz Andino, Jr., Edward De La Cruz Perez, McKenzie Debardeleben, Anamaria Carrasquero, Luis Galarza, Herman Toledo, Xuxa Sanes, Brian Nazario, Molly Wilson, Juan Gonzalez, Nolan Lavery, III, and Jose Ortiz.

The following defendants are still outstanding: David Santana and Valerie Multari.

Assistant Statewide Prosecutor David Gillespie will handle the case.

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