

For Immediate Release
July 21, 2011

**THIRTEEN FACING FEDERAL CHARGES FOR TRAFFICKING
HEROIN IN NORTHEAST HEIGHTS OF ALBUQUERQUE**

ALBUQUERQUE – United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales announced that thirteen defendants have been charged with federal heroin trafficking offenses based on an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the New Mexico State Police (NMSP), the Albuquerque Police Department (APD), and the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) that targeted heroin traffickers operating in Albuquerque’s Northeast Heights.

The defendants, who are charged in individual criminal complaints and indictments, were arrested following an investigation led by the DEA and pursued under the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program, a Department of Justice nationwide initiative that combines the resources and unique expertise of federal agencies, along with their local counterparts, in a coordinated attack against major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. The investigation was initiated in March 2011 in response to reports that young adults in Albuquerque, including students enrolled in high schools in Albuquerque’s Northeast Heights, are becoming addicted to expensive prescription painkillers like “OxyContin,” and then transitioning to heroin, a drug that provides a similar high for less money, sometimes with tragic consequences. In 2010 and earlier this year, Haley Paternoster, Michael Duran, Jr., and other Albuquerque teens reportedly died from overdoses after they transitioned from OxyContin to heroin, and statistics from the New Mexico Department of Health reflect that heroin overdose deaths among New Mexicans between 17 and 24 have increased steadily over the past few years. The investigation specifically targeted local heroin dealers who allegedly supplied heroin to young adults, teenagers and other high school aged children in Albuquerque’s Northeast

Heights neighborhoods.

The following Albuquerque residents are charged in individual indictments: **Michael Nafe**, 21, **Nathaniel Paul**, 26, **Jose Torres**, 25, and **David Witt**, 25. **Rebecca Corral**, 27, **Isaac Ortiz**, 21, **Jordan Padilla**, 23, and **Raelynn Sanchez**, 26, all residents of Albuquerque, individually are charged in criminal complaints. **Anthony Martinez**, 20, and **Fernando Trujillo**, 19, both residents of Espanola, also are charged in criminal complaints. If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum penalty of 20- years of imprisonment and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Corral, Ortiz, Padilla, Sanchez, and Witt were arrested on July 21, 2011, and made their initial appearances in Albuquerque federal court this morning. Martinez and Trujillo were arrested this morning and are scheduled to make their initial appearances on July 22, 2011. Nafe and Torres currently are detained in the Metropolitan Detention Center awaiting transfer to federal custody. Torres's initial appearance is scheduled for July 28, 2011 while Nafe's initial appearance has yet to be scheduled. Paul has yet to be apprehended and is considered a fugitive.

Three other defendants previously were arrested as part of this investigation. Mexican national **Pedro Enrique Torres-Mier**, 29, was arrested on March 9, 2011 on heroin trafficking charges in a criminal complaint, and was indicted on March 22, 2011. Torres-Mier, who has been in federal custody since his arrest, entered a guilty plea to count one of a three-count indictment earlier today. On May 19, 2011, **Adam Anthony Vallejos**, 20, and **Eddie Travis Centeno**, 21, both Albuquerque residents, were arrested on an indictment charging them with, heroin trafficking offenses. Centeno is detained pending trial while Vallejos was released under pretrial supervision. If convicted, each of these three defendants faces a maximum penalty of 20-years of imprisonment and a \$1,000,000 fine.

In announcing the results of this investigation, United States Attorney Kenneth J.

Gonzales said, “Teenage prescription drug abuse and the concomitant transition to heroin is a scourge that is sneaking into far too many of our families. This scourge does not discriminate, but instead is impacting all families, including those with no history of prior abuse.

Investigation and prosecution of those who prey on our children is not enough to defeat this scourge. All of us need to get the word out on the perils of prescription drug abuse, especially those confronting our children. To prevent teenage drug abuse, we need to get the word out not only to our children, but also to their parents, teachers and coaches and we need to learn to recognize the warning signs of drug addiction. And we need to do this before yet another child dies as a result of an overdose.”

“In this investigation, DEA targeted drug dealers who were preying on the youth of New Mexico. The resulting indictments and arrests further our efforts to prevent heroin trafficking from taking hold in our community. Nothing is more important than the safety and security of our community, especially our young people.” said Joseph M. Arabit, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration-El Paso Division.

These cases were investigated by the DEA, NMSP, APD and the USMS, and are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Elaine Y. Ramirez.

Charges in complaints and indictments are only accusations. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

###

11-312