

OFFICE OF THE
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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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**District Attorney's Marijuana Enforcement Prosecution Program
Quarterly Update**

Earlier in the year the Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office began quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive Officer's office to better coordinate the county's understanding and approach to marijuana crimes. In partnership with the Sheriff's Office, this quarterly meeting serves to educate all participants with where the County's enforcements efforts are focused and what successes and challenges are facing the investigative and prosecutorial team. It also serves to foster communication between the county's licensing procedures and the Sheriff's marijuana compliance team.

Investigations and Arrests

The District Attorney's Office began isolating marijuana case data in March of this year. Since that time, the District Attorney's Office has reviewed 10 warrants, including search and arrest warrants. These warrants represent hours and often day's worth of investigation, surveillance, research, and interviews in order to build the necessary factual foundation. They also represented a wide variety of investigations, from suspected illegal grows, to interstate distribution businesses, to individuals suspected of dealing marijuana products to middle school and high school juveniles.

In the past two months, the Marijuana Enforcement Team have identified three separate marijuana dealers targeting county middle and high school students. This has led to two arrests, and an additional arrest warrant for the third.

These investigations have also revealed troubling trends in how marijuana consumption among minors is changing. As the legal cannabis market has matured and introduced a wide variety of non-traditional products, it has inadvertently created goods that are both easily accessible to minors and, in some cases, seemingly marketed toward them. In a recent case, minors became ill after consuming chocolate-covered cannabis edibles.

Access to supplies for illicit dealers has never been easier. Black-market dealers can purchase thousands of dollars' worth of cannabis products legally from dispensaries, then resell them at a markup to school-aged children. Currently, the only barrier preventing this pipeline from expanding further is law enforcement intervention. California law treats the sale of marijuana to minors with the seriousness it deserves, and in every case brought forward, the District Attorney's Office seeks penalties sufficient to deter future offenders.

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Cases in Court

As of March of this year, the District Attorney's Office has brought charges in several cases. The District Attorney's Office can only provide limited information about cases which are pending final adjudication.

The People vs. Apolinar Ordaz-Soriano, 25CR01970

Mr. Ordaz-Soriano is charged with Transportation for Sale of Marijuana Across State Lines in violation of Health and Safety Code (HS) 11360(a)(3)(D), a felony. The case is currently pending.

The People v. Judd Edelstein, 25CR01678

Mr. Edelstein is charged with maintaining an illegal marijuana grow resulting in violation of Fish and Game codes in violation of HS 11358(d)(3)(C), as well as several other violations including Sale of Marijuana Across State Lines in violation of HS 11360(a)(3)(D). The case is currently pending.

The People v. Alexis Vazquez-Guzman, 25CR03093

Mr. Vazquez-Guzman is charged with Possession of Marijuana for Sale Related to the Sale to Minors, in violation of HS 11359(c)(3). The case is currently pending.

The People v. Jordan and Jonathan Alvarez Tostado Rodriguez, 24CR06375

The defendants in this case are charged with a number of crimes, both individual and separately, including Sale of Marijuana Across State Lines in violation of HS 11360(a)(3)(D), as well as Money Laundering, in violation of Penal Code (PC) 186.10(a)(1). The case is currently pending.

The People v. Jose Maya, 25CR02456

Mr. Maya is charged with Furnishing Cannabis to a Minor under the age of 14 in violation of HS 11361(a), as well as several other charges related to the sale of marijuana to minors. The case is currently pending.

Additionally, in the last two months the District Attorney's office has secured the forfeiture of over \$50,000 dollars as a result of the civil forfeitures process related to the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases.

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