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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release on January 11, 2020

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Rep. Rose, DA McMahon, NYC Special Narcotics Prosecutor Brennan, NYPD Discuss Efforts to Combat Illicit Fentanyl

*Congressman passed law to stem flow of illicit fentanyl from China, increase
opioid funding; SNP Brennan continues interdiction of fentanyl in New York
region;*

*DA notes fentanyl found in approximately 61% of fatal overdoses on Staten Island
in 2019; all continue calls for Albany to ban fentanyl analogs and make changes
to recent bail and discovery reforms to provide judicial discretion*

STATEN ISLAND – Congressman Max Rose, Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon, New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan, and NYPD officials held a press conference today to announce continued efforts to combat the opioid epidemic and stem the flow of illicit fentanyl into the United States and New York City.

Rose announced his legislation that was recently signed into law to sanction Chinese pharmaceutical companies for producing illicit fentanyl, as well as his successful effort to increase federal funding for opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery services that Rose passed into law. District Attorney McMahon noted that fentanyl was present in approximately 61 percent of confirmed overdoses that have been investigated through his office's Overdose Response Initiative in 2019. At the same time, DA McMahon, Congressman Rose, and SNP Brennan renewed calls for the state Legislature to immediately ban all fentanyl analogs and to make changes to recent bail and discovery reforms to provide judicial discretion. Under the new statute, even defendants arrested on A-1 felony charges of drug possession and A-1 felony sale are ineligible for bail and will be released upon arrest.

Congressman Max Rose said, "Stopping the flow of fentanyl into our community and ending the opioid epidemic is a top priority for all of us, because far too many children, parents, siblings and loved ones have been taken from us. Thanks to our collective and coordinated actions, we are getting results," Rose said. "I'm

proud that my Fentanyl Sanctions Act was signed into law to hold manufacturers accountable and that my efforts to increase opioid funding for those on the front lines were successful. But we also must hold those responsible for dealing these drugs of death accountable, which is why I strongly encourage state lawmakers to make critical changes to the new bail and discovery laws—including bringing back judicial discretion.”

District Attorney Michael E. McMahon said, “Fentanyl continues to be a driving force behind the majority of fatal overdoses we have seen on Staten Island and it is essential that all levels of government join together and do everything in our power to eliminate this deadly substance from our streets. While we have made serious progress in combating the opioid epidemic – both by holding drug dealers accountable with significant prison sentences and expanding treatment services for those suffering from substance abuse disorder – there is no doubt that fentanyl is still killing our loved ones every day. I thank Congressman Rose for his leadership in stemming the flow of fentanyl to our shores and Special Narcotics Prosecutor Brennan for her continued work in preventing this toxic substance from reaching our Island. Together, we are calling on the state Legislature to now ban all fentanyl analogs and make necessary changes to recent bail reforms so that drug defendants are not permitted to continue selling their poison in our communities.”

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan said, “I commend Congressman Rose for his tireless efforts to cut off the supply of the New York City’s most deadly drug at its source. Fentanyl is responsible for more opioid related deaths in New York City than any other substance. Chinese pharmaceutical manufacturers are the main source of easily obtained fentanyl variations, and holding them accountable will save lives. I thank District Attorney McMahon for his tireless efforts to reverse the opioid epidemic which has taken so many lives in Staten Island and for his leadership in calling for a ban on all fentanyl analogs, and pressing to reverse changes to the bail laws that will help high level drug traffickers.”

New York Police Department Commissioner Dermot F. Shea said, “The influx of fentanyl into our communities has reached a crisis point and has caused immeasurable suffering to families across our region. As long as individuals—wherever they are based—are involved in bringing fentanyl into our city, the NYPD and our partners will relentlessly work to stop this threat to public safety.”

Rose’s bipartisan [Fentanyl Sanctions Act](#), which was recently [signed into law](#) as part of the NDAA, will combat the illicit flow of fentanyl into our communities by applying pressure on the Chinese government to honor their commitment to make all fentanyl illegal and provide the United States with more tools and resources to go after illicit traffickers in China, Mexico, and other countries through sanctions and other measures. Following a Rose-led [bipartisan push](#) that was supported by DA McMahon for the “[highest possible](#)” funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the most important federal agency in fighting the opioid crisis, Congress [increased](#) funding by \$140 million in the recent funding legislation that was signed into law.

At the same time, DA McMahon, Congressman Rose, and SNP Brennan called on the State Legislature to move immediately to ban all unscheduled fentanyl analogs. Fentanyl is a deadly synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine but many of its analogs are not illegal in New York State unless mixed with a banned substance. Banning fentanyl analogs would enable law enforcement to further crack down on dealers and combat emerging new drugs while better preventing overdoses. These aggressive steps are especially important when it comes to prosecuting drug cases and can help prosecutors hold dealers more accountable

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