



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For Release: May 19, 2017

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Police make multiple arrests for heroin distribution

Part of a larger effort to combat the opioid crisis

Howard County Police continue to combat the opioid crisis by targeting drug dealers and devoting resources to monitor and investigate the use of opioids in the county. In the last few weeks, police have arrested seven people in three heroin distribution cases.

In April, detectives arrested two drug dealers for distributing heroin in Howard County. Roger Lee Burks, 28, of Eutaw Place in Baltimore, was indicted by a grand jury on drug distribution charges. Burks has since been released from the Howard County Detention Center on \$50,000 bond. Brandon Dews, 32, of North Avenue in Baltimore, was indicted this week on multiple counts of drug distribution and possession. He was released on \$75,000 bond.

In a separate case in early May, police arrested three suspects with ties to heroin distribution in Mount Airy. Detectives opened an investigation after receiving complaints about drug activity at a residence in the 17700 block of Frederick Road beginning last fall. Through investigation, they developed multiple suspects and served a search warrant at the residence, resulting in the seizure of suspected heroin, as well as hundreds of vials and other drug paraphernalia.

Antonio Eugene Russell, 43, and Jonathan Donyell Russell, 37, both of Frederick Road in Mount Airy, were charged with drug possession with the intent to distribute and related charges. Additionally, Dennis Carl Bonenberger, 27, of Timber Run Court in Monrovia was charged with drug possession and related charges. Jonathan Russell was released from the detention center on \$25,000 bond, Antonio Russell was released on \$5,000 bond and Bonenberger was released on \$3,500 bond.

In a third case in mid-May, detectives concluded a three-month investigation into a drug dealer who was selling heroin and cocaine in Howard County. Police learned that the suspect, Robert Ehrhardt, 31, was dividing his time between two addresses, one in Elkridge, Howard County, and the other in Hanover, Anne Arundel County. HCPD collaborated with AAPD to serve search warrants at both residences. The result was the seizure of more than 100 grams of heroin and 86 grams of crack cocaine. Ehrhardt was arrested at the Hanover residence by AAPD. He was charged with multiple counts of drug distribution and released on \$40,000 bond. A woman also in the house at the time, Nicole Koppleman, 28, was charged with drug possession and released on her own recognizance.

To date, there have been 18 heroin-related deaths and 73 non-fatal heroin overdoses in Howard County in 2017. In 2016, there were 29 heroin-related deaths and 131 non-fatal heroin overdoses.

“We are aggressively going after people who are selling opioids, like heroin and prescription pills, on our streets,” said Police Chief Gary L. Gardner. “These recent arrests are a positive step in our effort to address this epidemic, but we know we can’t enforce our way out of the problem. That’s why we are collaborating with other agencies to approach this from all sides, including prevention, education, treatment and recovery.”

In addition to identifying and pursuing drug dealers, police are working in collaboration with other county agencies in a multi-faceted effort to curb opioid abuse. The department also has created a new grant-funded heroin coordinator position in the narcotics section, to analyze trends, coordinate efforts with other jurisdictions, and assist in the county’s health department efforts to provide support for families affected by opioid use.

The police department encourages residents to report suspected drug activity by calling 410-290-DRUG. Callers may remain anonymous. If you or someone you know needs treatment for opioid abuse, call 410-313-6202 (800-422-0009 after hours) or visit www.hchealth.org/gethelp.

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