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DISTRICT ATTORNEY

## *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

### **PLYMOUTH DISTRICT**

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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### **DA CRUZ ANNOUNCES 2021 FATAL OVERDOSE, HOMICIDE STATISTICS FOR PLYMOUTH COUNTY**

**BROCKTON** – Massachusetts State Police troopers assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney’s Office investigated nine homicides and responded to 132 suspected fatal drug overdoses in 2021, according to Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz.

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Massachusetts State Police assigned to the District Attorney’s Office have the responsibility of investigating all sudden or unattended deaths if under violent, suspicious, or unusual circumstances. These deaths are investigated by the District Attorney’s law enforcement representative, which in our county is the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit-Homicide Section. The State Police Detective Unit works in conjunction with the local police on death investigations.

In 2021, there were a total of 132 suspected fatal overdoses in the county for the year. In 2020, there were 165 suspected fatal overdoses in the county, and in 2019, there were 143 suspected fatal overdoses. These numbers were compiled from suspected fatal overdoses that Massachusetts State Police troopers responded to.

“We are pleased that the number of suspected fatal overdoses was down in 2021, but one overdose is still one too many,” DA Cruz said. “This coming year, we will continue our work with the Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force to get help and resources to those addicted and their families. We spent much of 2021 expanding our Handle with Care program so that all 27 communities here in Plymouth County have the tools and training to address trauma sensitivity and help children coping with Adverse Childhood Experiences, so that they build resiliency and succeed.”

In 2015, DA Cruz along with Plymouth County Sheriff Joseph McDonald formed the Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force, an effort to engage all community sectors to work on the opioid issue. The Drug Abuse Task Force brings law enforcement, the medical community, educators and substance abuse experts together to share information and track the current trends of the opiate epidemic. Out of the task force emerged

Plymouth County Outreach (PCO), the county-wide effort to reach overdose victims and their families and get them the support and services they need in the critical hours after an incident. PCO is comprised of 27 municipal police departments in Plymouth County, along with the Bridgewater State University Police.

In 2021, according to numbers compiled by Massachusetts State Police assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office, the unit responded to a total of 9 homicides in Plymouth County, 7 of which occurred in the city of Brockton. Arrests have been made in six of the nine homicides, and State Police continue to actively investigate the remaining three. In 2020, MSP responded to a total of 7 homicides in Plymouth County. In 2019, State Police responded to 10 homicides.

Additionally in 2021, there were 21 individuals were struck by gunfire. That is compared to 2020 where 31 individuals were struck. In 2019, 23 individuals were struck.

“As District Attorney I see firsthand the impact of violence and homicide on the community, particularly on surviving family and friends,” DA Cruz said. “The tentacles of trauma associated with gun violence and homicide run deep, and the ripple effect is wide. We strive every day to hold accountable those perpetrating violent crime, but also use our resources to support the prevention and re-entry work of our Safe Streets coalition here in Brockton. We look forward to continuing these efforts in 2022.”

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