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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 24, 2010
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MAJOR SUPPLIER OF BLACK TAR HEROIN PLEADS GUILTY

Huntington Overdose Deaths Linked To Drug Source

HUNTINGTON, W. Va. – A Mexican National pleaded guilty today to charges stemming from his role in the distribution of black tar heroin that has been linked to several drug overdoses in the Huntington, West Virginia area. Joel Adolfo Borjas-Hernandez, 25, who was scheduled to stand trial today for his conduct, entered a guilty plea to a one-count Information charging him with conspiring with others to distribute at least one kilogram of heroin.

According to Court documents, in September 2007, law enforcement and medical personnel in Huntington, West Virginia responded to a series of overdose deaths resulting from the ingestion of black tar heroin. Investigators from the Huntington Police Department, Cabell County Sheriff's Office, the Huntington Drug and Violent Crime Task Force, FBI and DEA launched a long-term investigation resulting in the convictions of approximately 20 individuals in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia.

The investigation revealed that people from the Huntington area were travelling to Columbus, Ohio to obtain Mexican black tar heroin from an individual known only as "Carlos." Most of those people obtained the heroin either from Columbus dealers supplied by Carlos' organization or from runners working for Carlos. Eventually, investigators were able to make purchases of black tar heroin from the organization using informants and undercover investigators. Several witnesses identified Carlos as Joel Adolpho Borjas-Hernandez.

On June 13, 2009, Officer Ryan Rosser of the Columbus Police Department stopped Borjas-Hernandez for a minor traffic offense. Borjas-Hernandez was arrested on an illegal immigration charge and held in Columbus pending deportation proceedings. An inmate at the facility notified authorities that Borjas-Hernandez was the man known as "Carlos."

At his plea hearing, Borjas-Hernandez told United States District Judge Robert C. Chambers that throughout his involvement in the organization, he and another man received 15 bags of heroin at a time from two men in Columbus. Borjas-Hernandez further stated that the two then distributed the heroin to street-level dealers in and around Columbus, Ohio. He further acknowledged that some of those dealers distributed the heroin to individuals from Huntington where the heroin was resold and used.

Borjas-Hernandez is scheduled to be sentenced on November 22, 2010, at which time he will face a mandatory term of 10 years to life imprisonment. At the hearing, the Government advised Judge Chambers that it will seek a significant sentence enhancement under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines because of the overdose deaths resulting from heroin distributed by Borjas-Hernandez' drug trafficking organization.

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