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# San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Success in Prosecuting Drugged Driving Cases Leads California Office of Traffic Safety to Renew Grant**

The California Office of Traffic Safety has renewed a grant that puts highly trained, specialized prosecutors in the courtroom when motorists are arrested in San Diego for driving under the influence of drugs, or drugs in combination with alcohol.

The \$238,346 grant to the San Diego City Attorney's Office will fund the continued operations of an Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driving (ADID) vertical prosecution team that works the cases from arrest through sentencing.

With support from this grant, the office prosecuted 150 impaired-driving cases over a 12-month period, the majority of them purely drug DUI cases, with a 99 percent conviction rate. It had prosecuted 88 cases over the previous 12 months.

Most of the drivers were impaired by one or more prescription drugs. Those drugs included Alprazolam (Xanax), Amphetamine (Adderall), Buprenorphine (Subutex), Carisprodol (Soma), Clonazepam (Klonopin), Codeine/Acetaminophen (Tylenol with Codeine), Diazepam (Valium), Fentanyl (Fentora), Seroquel (Quetiapine), Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen, Hydromorphone (Dilaudid), Methylphenidate (Ritalin), Morphine (MS Contin), Oxycodone (OxyContin, Roxicodone), Oxycodone/Acetaminophen (Percocet, Percodan), Tramadol (Ultram), Lorazepam (Ativan), Methadone, Duloxetine (Cymbalta), Gabapentin (Neurontin), Risperidone (Risperdal), Trazodone (Oleptro), Sertraline (Zoloft), and Zolpidem (Ambien).

Also present in many cases were illegal drugs such as methamphetamine, cocaine, PCP, heroin, ecstasy (MDMA), Ketamine, Spice (synthetic marijuana), inhalants, hallucinogens like acid, and Cannabinoids (marijuana).

**“Drug-impaired driving comes in many forms -- each as dangerous as drunk driving,”** City Attorney Jan Goldsmith said. **“A growing number of cases involve the misuse or abuse of prescription drugs, or combinations of drugs, and can be successfully prosecuted only with specialized skills and knowledge. Through the leadership of our office, law enforcement is becoming better trained at recognizing drugged driving, and dangerous motorists are being given stiffer sentences.”**

Under the grant, San Diego law enforcement officers have received specialized training from Deputy City Attorney Taylor Garrot in better identifying suspects of drug DUIs, as well as how to effectively investigate,

evaluate, and secure blood samples from those arrested under suspicion of driving while impaired by drugs and alcohol.

Garrot works with the State's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Program to expand knowledge and resources in the office and share information with peers and law enforcement personnel throughout the county and across the state.

In addition, more than 100 students at targeted high schools are receiving educational presentations about drug- and alcohol-impaired driving.

In 2013, there were 69 deaths and 1,649 serious injuries as a result of DUI crashes in San Diego County. In 2012, there were 86 deaths and 2,317 serious injuries.

**“Overall, California’s roadways are among the safest in the nation,”** said OTS Director Rhonda Craft. **“But to meet future mobility, safety, and accessible transportation objectives, we have to work very hard together to reach our common goal – zero deaths on our roadways. The Office of Traffic Safety and the San Diego City Attorney’s Office want to work with everyone to create a culture of traffic safety across San Diego and the state.”**

Funding for the program comes from a grant by the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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