



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 4, 2019

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San Diego City Attorney's Office Awarded Special Drug DUI Prosecution Grant

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced today that drivers arrested for being under the influence of drugs in the City of San Diego can expect to face highly trained, specialized prosecutors, funded by a \$198,302 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The grant to the City Attorney's Office will continue to fund a team that works drug DUI cases from arrest through conviction and sentencing.

“Driving under the influence of drugs can have devastating effects on San Diego drivers and their families,” City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“Our City continues to see DUI cases involving the misuse of prescription drugs, marijuana, and illegal drugs, often in combination with alcohol. This grant allows our highly specialized prosecution team to work closely with law enforcement to hold accountable those who endanger our community.”**

Funding from this Drug DUI Prosecution Grant will aid the City Attorney's Office in handling cases throughout each step of the criminal process, prosecuting both drug-impaired and drug/alcohol-impaired driving cases. Prosecution team members will work with the State's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Program to expand knowledge and resources in the emerging problem of drug-impaired driving

In the past year under the 2018-2019 OTS grant (Oct. 1, 2018-Sept. 30, 2019), the vertical prosecution team filed 212 misdemeanor cases of driving under the influence of drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs. The office as a whole filed 2,889 DUI cases during that period.

The purpose of the program is to prevent impaired driving and reduce alcohol and drug-impaired traffic deaths and injuries. In 2015, there were 90 deaths and 2,364 serious injuries as a result of DUI crashes in the County of San Diego.

In recent years, California has seen an increase in drug-impaired driving crashes. The City Attorney's Office supports efforts from OTS reminding the public that “DUI Doesn't Just Mean Booze.” If you take prescription drugs, particularly those with a driving or operating machinery warning on the label, you might be impaired enough to get a DUI. Marijuana use can also be impairing, especially in combination with alcohol or other drugs, and can result in a DUI arrest and conviction.

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“Prosecution programs ensure drivers who decide to drive impaired and put others on the road at risk are held accountable,” OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. **“Accountability is important in highlighting the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence.”**

Funding for this vertical prosecution program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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