

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**LEADER OF MAJOR HEROIN TRAFFICKING RING
OPERATING
OUT OF ALBUQUERQUE'S NORTHEAST HEIGHTS
SENTENCED TO TWENTY YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON**

***Bustamante-Conchas Also Ordered to Pay \$100,000.00
Fine***

ALBUQUERQUE – U.S. Attorney Damon P. Martinez and Special Agent in Charge Will R. Glaspy of the DEA's El Paso Field Division announced that Miguel Bustamante-Conchas, 39, was sentenced late yesterday afternoon to 20 years in federal prison for his heroin trafficking conviction. He also was ordered to pay a \$100,000.00 fine. Bustamante-Conchas is a legal permanent resident from Mexico who resides in Albuquerque, N.M.; he will be deported after completing his prison sentence.

“New Mexico’s opioid addiction and overdose death rates have been at or near the top of the national scale for years,” said U.S. Attorney Damon P. Martinez. “Under our recently announced HOPE Initiative, we will take on this epidemic by focusing our investigative and prosecutorial resources on significant heroin traffickers while supporting expanded treatment options for those struggling with the disease of addiction.”

“The sentencing of Miguel Bustamante-Conchas exemplifies DEA’s relentless commitment to keep dangerous drugs and those who traffic them off of our streets. DEA continues to focus on the drug trafficking organizations that

spread this kind of poison in central and northern New Mexico,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Will Glaspy. “Let this not only be an example, but also a warning to those who think they can go unnoticed. One day we will knock on your door and you too will face the same fate as Bustamante-Conchas.”

Bustamante-Conchas was one of seven men arrested in June 2013 on federal narcotics trafficking charges as a result of a 15-month multi-agency investigation targeting heroin traffickers operating out of Albuquerque’s Northeast Heights, an area that has experienced a growing, wide-spread heroin abuse problem among teens and young adults in recent years. More than 25 pounds of heroin were seized during the course of the investigation.

Two indictments were filed as a result of the investigation. Bustamante-Conchas and four other men were charged in one indictment while two others were charged in a second indictment. The other six defendants entered guilty pleas to heroin trafficking charges while Bustamante-Conchas elected to proceed to trial on a three-count superseding indictment charging him with (1) conspiracy to distribute large quantities of heroin in Bernalillo County, N.M., from Oct. 2012 to June 2013; (2) aiding and abetting the possession of heroin with intent to distribute; and (3) aiding and abetting the use of a firearm in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

Trial of the case began on July 30, 2014. On Aug. 4, 2014, the court dismissed the firearms charge at the conclusion of the United States’ case and submitted the two heroin trafficking charges to the jury. The jury returned a verdict of guilty on the two heroin trafficking charges on Aug. 6, 2014.

The evidence at trial established that Bustamante-Conchas played a leadership role in a major heroin trafficking organization by managing the acquisition, storage and distribution of kilograms of heroin and overseeing the collection of cash proceeds from the sale of heroin. Evidence of Bustamante-Conchas role in the drug trafficking organization was secured from wiretaps on telephones used by his subordinates, evidence seized during a law enforcement operation on June 14, 2013, and evidence seized on June 19, 2013. Evidence obtained on June 14, 2013, included three pounds of heroin, drug ledgers, numerous cellphones and narcotics paraphernalia, which were seized at the residences maintained as stash houses by Bustamante-Conchas and his co-conspirators. An additional 22 pounds of heroin were seized on June 19, 2013 from another of the organization's stash houses.

Three of Bustamante-Conchas' four co-defendants pled guilty to participating in a heroin trafficking conspiracy and are serving federal prison sentences. Baltazar Granados, 38, pled guilty on June 17, 2014, and was sentenced to 80 months in prison on Nov. 20, 2014. Ramon Cabrales-Guerra, 23, pled guilty on June 23, 2014, and was sentenced to 46 months in prison on Oct. 10, 2014. Angel Miramontes-Cruz, 23, pled guilty on May 29, 2014, and was sentenced on Oct. 10, 2014, to 24 months in federal prison. All three men are Mexican nationals illegally present in the United States and will be deported after completing their prison sentences.

The fourth co-defendant, Ruben Garcia Miranda, 53, an Albuquerque resident, pled guilty on June 12, 2014, to using a communications device to facilitate a drug trafficking

crime. He is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 22, 2015.

Joel Nunez-Haros, 43, and Pablo Arturo Felix-Sicairos, 21, also were arrested in June 2013, and charged in a separate indictment with possession of heroin with intent to distribute. Both men pled guilty to the indictment in late June 2014. Nunez-Haros was sentenced to 57 months in prison on Nov. 20, 2014, and Felix-Sicairos was sentenced to 44 months in prison on Oct. 10, 2014. Both men are Mexican nationals illegally present in the United States and will be deported after completing their prison sentences.

These cases were investigated by the Albuquerque office of the DEA, the Albuquerque Police Department and the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office and were prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sean J. Sullivan, Nicholas J. Ganjei and Paul Mysliwec.

The investigation resulting in these cases, which was code-named "Balloon Fiesta" in reference to the multi-colored balloons that heroin often is packaged in for retail distribution, was designated as part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDETF") program. OCDETF is a nationwide Department of Justice program that combines the resources and unique expertise of federal agencies, along with their local counterparts, in a coordinated effort to disrupt and dismantle major drug trafficking organizations.

The New Mexico Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Initiative is a collaboration between the U.S. Attorney's Office and the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center that is partnering with the Bernalillo County Opioid Accountability Initiative with the overriding goal of reducing the number of opioid-related deaths in the

District of New Mexico. The HOPE Initiative comprised of five components: (1) prevention and education; (2) treatment; (3) law enforcement; (4) reentry; and (5) strategic planning. The law enforcement component of the HOPE Initiative is led by the Organized Crime Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office and the DEA in conjunction with their federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement partners. Targeting major heroin traffickers like Bustamante-Conchas for investigation and prosecution is a priority of the HOPE Initiative.

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