

NEWS RELEASE

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Drug Team convicts 2 of trafficking offenses, refers others to Recovery Courts

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of July 15, 2019, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 36 defendants. The defendants entered their guilty pleas in courtroom 5310 before The Honorable Karen Eady-Williams, Superior Court Judge. The convictions were for crimes that included possessing, selling and trafficking in illegal drugs. Based on the structured sentencing laws in North Carolina, sentences ranged from probation to active prison sentences.

While the team works to hold drug sellers and traffickers accountable for their crimes, prosecutors also connect defendants facing addictions with treatment services. Since June 12, 2019, a total of 19 defendants have been referred to Mecklenburg County Recovery Courts, and nine defendants have enrolled. Seven defendants were referred to Superior STEP Recovery Court, six were referred to District STEP Recovery Court, five were referred to Wellness Court (formerly Mental Health Treatment Court), and two defendants were referred to DWI Recovery Court. In addition, two Wellness Court participants successfully completed the program and graduated on June 26, 2019.

Among the defendants who pled guilty and were sent to prison were:

Abraham Vargas, 35, pled guilty to trafficking in methamphetamine by possession. Judge Eady-Williams sentenced Vargas to 70-93 months in prison. In November 2018, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police and Drug Enforcement Agency task force officers received information that Vargas would be delivering a large amount of methamphetamine at a pre-determined meeting location. Officers made contact with Vargas at that location and seized more than 900 grams of methamphetamine.

Denzel Hillary, 26, pled guilty to attempted trafficking in opiates by possession. Judge Eady-Williams sentenced Hillary to 17-30 months in prison.

James Armstrong, 27, pled guilty to possession with the intent to sell or deliver methamphetamine. Judge Eady-Williams sentenced Armstrong to 6-17 months in prison.

Note: Almost all guilty pleas entered in criminal administrative court are the result of an agreed upon plea arrangement between the State and the defendant, which is then approved by the sentencing judge. For more information about why most cases must be resolved by plea negotiation instead of jury trial, please visit the "Understanding Criminal Court" section of the DA's website at www.charmeckda.com.

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