

Southcoast Health visiting nurse association's supportive care services earns 4-Star rating for hospice

“Presented on Medicare’s updated Care Compare platform, Hospice Care from Southcoast Health’s Visiting Nurse Association earned a 4-star Family Caregiver Survey Rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), officials announced.

“The 4-star Hospice Family Caregiver Survey rating demonstrates the Supportive Care Center’s commitment to providing the highest quality care and making a positive impact on the lives of patients we care for and their families as they navigate this difficult time,” says Patricia Buiocchi, Senior Vice President of Post-Acute Services for Southcoast Health’s Visiting Nurse Association (VNA).

Hospice is a specialized kind of care that offers comfort and support to patients who are no longer seeking active treatment, and instead are just managing chronic conditions. This form of supportive care works to improve the quality of life, provide pain relief and comfort measures for terminally ill patients.



Southcoast Health photo.

All Star Ratings are based on results from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Hospice survey, created by CMS to help patients compare and select a hospice program. They were publicly reported for the first time in August 2022 for all hospices with 75 or more completed surveys from Quarter 2 2019 – Quarter 4 2019 and Quarter 3 2020 – Quarter 3 2021.

The survey consists of 47 questions assessing eight quality measures, including communication with family, getting timely help, treating patients with respect, emotional and spiritual support, help for pain and symptoms, training family to care for patients and willingness to recommend the hospice to others.

It is administered to the primary informal caregiver or descendant of a patient who died while receiving hospice care. Of hospices ranked, 39 percent earned a 4-star ranking with only 10 percent earning five stars. CMS will continue to display overall Hospice CAHPS star ratings on the public reporting platform, care compare. Star Ratings will be updated every other quarter, taking into account eight rolling quarters of data.

Southcoast Health VNA's Supportive Care Center consists of an

expert team of physicians, nurse practitioners, certified hospice nurses, social workers, chaplains, bereavement counselors, home health aides, and specially trained volunteers.



Southcoast Health photo.

At home and in inpatient settings, these providers care for patients with all kinds of life-limiting diseases such as cancer, dementia, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, heart, lung, or kidney disease and more.

To learn more about Southcoast Health's hospice services please call (800) 698-6877 to schedule a consultation or contact us online.

About Southcoast Health

For more than 25 years, Southcoast Health has served communities across southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island as the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region. The not-for-profit, charitable system includes three

acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial in Fall River, St. Luke's in New Bedford (a Level II Trauma Center), and Tobey in Wareham – as well as a network of over 700 physicians, hospitalists, and midlevel practitioners.

Southcoast Health has established seven Urgent Care Centers, two Cancer Centers, a Visiting Nurse Association, and numerous ambulatory facilities that ensure convenient access to services for 725,000 residents in 33 communities covering 900 square miles. In addition, the system partners with Acadia Healthcare to offer expanded resources at Southcoast Behavioral Health in Dartmouth.

Southcoast Health is a Newsweek's World's Best Hospital in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. In 2021, St. Luke's was named to Newsweek and Leapfrog's Best Maternity Hospitals for the second consecutive year, while US News ranked Southcoast among the 10 best hospitals in Massachusetts, and 2nd among those in the Providence Metro area. For three straight years, Southcoast Health has earned Best Hospitals and Best Place to Work in SouthCoast Media Group's Best of the Best Awards, voted on by residents and readers.

With upward of 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in southeastern Massachusetts, and one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth, according to the Boston Business Journal. More information is available online at www.southcoast.org. Connect to Southcoast Health through social media on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Southcoast® is a registered trademark of Southcoast Health System.

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Southcoast Hospitals Group, which includes Charlton Memorial Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital and Tobey Hospital, is a 2020 Newsweek's World's Best Hospital."

Massachusetts Gov. Baker announces commutation of Ramadan Shabazz, pardons six

“Today, Governor Charlie Baker announced the commutation of the first-degree murder sentence of Ramadan Shabazz to second degree murder, making him immediately eligible for parole. The Parole Board, serving in its function as the Advisory Board of Pardons, recently recommended Mr. Shabazz’s commutation.

The Massachusetts Constitution grants the Governor the power to commute, or remit, a portion of a criminal sentence and the power to issue a pardon. Governor Baker issued updated Executive Clemency Guidelines in February 2020. Petitions for commutation and pardon are reviewed by the Advisory Board of Pardons. The Board evaluates the petition, weighing the factors laid out in the Executive Guidelines, and makes a recommendation to the Governor.

“The ability to grant pardons and commutations is one of the most solemn responsibilities given to me as Governor, and I have considered each and every request that has been placed before me with careful deliberation,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Mr. Shabazz’s crime was horrific, but he has not only taken full responsibility for his actions but has also dedicated his life in prison to bettering himself and serving as a mentor to others in prison. Commutation serves as a strong motivation for an incarcerated individual to improve themselves, and Mr. Shabazz serves as a remarkable example of self-development for other incarcerated individuals.”

Ramadan Shabazz is a 72-year-old man who has served fifty

years in prison for the murders of Harry Jeffreys and Calvin Thorn. On August 14, 1971, Mr. Shabazz, along with co-defendant Raymond White, shot Mr. Jeffreys and Mr. Thorn, who were working at the Freedom Foods grocery store in Dorchester. After fatally wounding both men, Mr. Shabazz and his co-defendant stole upwards of \$19,000 from Mr. Thorn's car.

On March 21, 1972, a Suffolk County jury found Mr. Shabazz guilty, and he was sentenced to the death penalty for the two murders. In 1976, after the Supreme Judicial Court ruled the death penalty unconstitutional, Mr. Shabazz's sentences were reduced to life imprisonment. While incarcerated, Mr. Shabazz has participated in over 50 rehabilitative programs, including addiction treatment, anger management and restorative justice classes.

He has worked as a GED tutor and a drug counselor, specifically mentoring incarcerated young men, and has participated in the Companion Program at Bridgewater State Hospital. He obtained both his Bachelor's and Master's Degree through Boston University's prison education program. He successfully completed 48 furloughs before the program was terminated. He has been employed consistently during his time incarcerated, working jobs from kitchen services to law library clerk.

The Governor also announced the pardons of six individuals: Gerald Amirault, Cheryl Amirault Lefave, Brian Morin, Camille Joseph Chaisson, Michael Biagini and Robert Busa.

"The investigations and prosecutions of the Amiraults in the 1980s took place without the benefit of scientific studies that have in the intervening years led to widespread adoption of investigative protocols designed to protect objectivity and reliability in the investigation of child sex abuse cases," said Governor Baker. "Given the absence of these protections in these cases, and like many others who have reviewed the record of these convictions over the years, including legal

experts, social scientists and even several judges charged with reviewing the cases, I am left with grave doubt regarding the evidentiary strength of these convictions. As measured by the standard we require of our system of justice, Gerald Amirault and Cheryl Amirault Lefave ought to be pardoned.

“For the other four individuals that I have nominated for pardons, the charges in their cases also relate to decades-old offenses. Each individual has had clean records since these older charges and receiving a pardon will allow them to move forward in their lives. I urge the Governor’s Council to consider each of these cases carefully.”

“While I stand behind the decisions made at the time by the prosecutors, judge and jury, I believe the Governor’s decision is a fitting end to a very troubled case,” said former Attorney General Tom Reilly, about the Amirault pardons.

For more on Brian Morin, [click here](#).

For more on Camille Joseph Chaisson, [click here](#).

For more on Michael Biagini, [click here](#).

For more on Robert Busa, [click here](#).” -Mass.gov.

**Pickup truck parked across 2
spaces reserved for
Massachusetts State Police**

Leads to arrest

"A "gimme" in golf refers to a putt so short that it is essentially unmissable. This was a "gimme".

Saturday morning, November 11, shortly before 3:30 a.m. Trooper Alexa Harvey of the 87th Recruit Training Troop and her field training officer Trooper Kyle Panciera were pulling into the Weston Barracks from the Massachusetts Turnpike. While attempting to park their cruiser, as usual, the Troopers made their way to spots placarded with signs that read: AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY – STATE POLICE RESERVED PARKING. In this instance however, the Troopers were unable to find an adequate spot due to a white F-150 truck parked across two spaces, perpendicular to the lines designated for the cruiser parking.

Trooper Harvey approached the F-150 and saw two men in the truck asleep with the truck keys inside. Trooper Panciera attempted several times to knock on the window and make the Troopers' presence known, but neither man was able to be roused from their sleep.

After many minutes, Trooper Salvatore Gustin, who did not need to travel far to back up Troopers Harvey and Panciera, was able to wake the passenger and driver of the truck. The driver sat up and attempted to put the truck into gear multiple times, by moving the shift lever with his right hand. Fortunately, the truck did not shift, and the Troopers were able to have the men open the doors in order to find out why the men had parked in cruiser spaces.

Slightly shaking off his lethargic state, the driver of the truck, WALLACE DE FREITAS, 39, of Framingham stepped out of the truck. DE FREITAS was unsteady on his feet, smelled of alcohol, and slurred his speech. DE FREITAS agreed to perform field sobriety tests, which yielded results commensurate to

the attempt to park earlier that morning.

DE FREITAS was placed under arrest and walked a short distance to the door of the Weston Barracks for booking. Later in the morning, he was released into the care of an acquaintance and scheduled to be arraigned at Waltham District Court on the following charges:

1. Operating Under The Influence of Liquor; and
 2. Mass Pike – Restricted Parking Violation.” -Massachusetts State Police.
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Bronx man indicted for child exploitation offenses in Massachusetts

” A Bronx, N.Y. man was indicted today by a federal grand jury in Boston in connection with coercing a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing child pornography, as well as traveling with the intent to engage in illicit conduct with the minor victim.

Markell Greene, 25, was indicted on one count of sexual exploitation of minors and one count of travel with intent to engage in illicit conduct. Greene is currently in state custody on related charges and will appear in federal court in Boston at a later date.

According to the charging documents, Greene persuaded, enticed and coerced a 13-year-old minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing child pornography. Additionally, it is alleged that on or about Feb. 14, 2022,

Greene traveled in interstate commerce with a motivating purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct with the minor victim.

The charge of sexual exploitation of children provides for a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and up to 30 years in prison, at least five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of travel with intent to engage in illicit conduct provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison, at least five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Members of the public who have questions, concerns or information regarding this case should call 617-748-3274.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins and Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Arlington, Mass. and New York City Police Departments; the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office; and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Luke A. Goldworm of Rollins' Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/psc>.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.” -Massachusetts Department of Justice.

EPA takes action on school bus idling violators in Massachusetts communities

“Companies Will Implement Anti-Idling Programs and Pay Penalties under the Clean Air Act.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has settled enforcement actions against two companies that violated state and federal clean air standards by allowing excessive idling of school buses at locations in four Massachusetts communities.

The first settlement resolved EPA’s allegations that AA Transportation Co., Inc. of Shrewsbury, Mass. allowed excessive idling of school buses at three locations: two locations in Shrewsbury, and one in Webster, Mass. A separate settlement resolved EPA’s allegations that Michael J. Connolly & Sons, Inc. of Walpole, Mass. allowed excessive idling of school buses at two locations, in Sharon, and Natick, Mass.

“Pollution from diesel-powered vehicles is a serious health concern for people throughout New England – that’s why idling diesel school buses is unacceptable” said EPA New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash. “Children, especially those suffering from asthma or other respiratory ailments, are particularly vulnerable to diesel exhaust. We also know that

chronic ailments are more likely for people living in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities. Following existing rules to limit school bus idling helps protect the health of school children in communities across the country.”

Idling diesel engines emit pollutants that can cause or aggravate a variety of health problems including asthma and other respiratory diseases, and the fine particles in diesel exhaust are a likely human carcinogen. Diesel exhaust not only contributes to area-wide air quality problems, but more direct exposure can cause lightheadedness, nausea, sore throat, coughing, and other symptoms. Drivers, school children riding on the buses, facility workers, neighbors and bystanders are all vulnerable.

AA Transportation will pay a \$23,587 penalty, and Michael Connolly & Sons will pay a \$28,500 penalty. Both companies have certified that they are now in compliance with federal and Massachusetts regulations limiting idling of vehicles. In both settlements, the companies agreed to implement various measures to promote compliance, including the use of GPS systems to track instances of excessive idling, modification of automatic shutoff timing systems to prevent excess idling, and increased driver awareness training.

In fall 2021, EPA inspectors observed AA Transportation school buses idling for extended periods of time in school bus lots at 648 Lake Street and 605 Hartford Turnpike in Shrewsbury, and at 175 Thompson Road in Webster. During four separate inspections, EPA observed approximately 48 buses idling, resulting in a total idling time of 407 minutes in excess of the 5-minute Massachusetts anti-idling limit.

In early 2022, an EPA inspector observed Michael Connolly & Sons school buses idling for extended periods of time in school bus lots at 67 High Plain Street in Sharon, and 67 Rockland Street in Natick. During three separate inspections,

EPA observed approximately 35 buses idling resulting in a total idling time of 360 minutes in excess of the 5-minute Massachusetts anti-idling limit.

More information: EPA School Bus Idle Reduction."-EPA.gov.

New Bedford roadwork sites for the upcoming week of November 21, 2022 – November 25, 2022

"The City of New Bedford has roadwork sites for the upcoming week of November 21, 2022 – November 25, 2022, and they are as follows:

Offices will be closed & no construction works Thursday, November 24th and Friday, November 25th.

Eversource:

Eversource will be working on gas main relays and test pits on:

- Phillips Rd from Holly Tree Lane to Route 140

Other:

- Contractor (KR Rezendes, Inc.) will be painting all pavement markings on Monday at MassDOT's Hathaway Triangle project located at the newly signalized intersection of Hathaway Rd x Nauset St. Lane shifts required, police officers and signage will be posted during operations.

- Contractor (PA Landers) will be raising structures on

Clifford St from Ashley Blvd to Acushnet Ave. Contractor will be stabilizing the site to wrap up for the winter season. Sidewalk reconstruction and top paving course to take place in the Spring 2023.

- Contractor (PA Landers) will continue curb installation and sidewalk reconstruction along a portion of Phillips Rd north of Birchwood Dr.
 - Contractor (PA Landers) will be working on West Street in the vicinity of St. Luke's Hospital raising structures in the roadway and stabilizing the site for the winter season. Final top course paving to be done in the Spring 2023.
 - Contractor (PA Landers) will be working on wheelchair ramp upgrades along a portion of East Rodney French Blvd from Abbott St to Butler St.
 - Contractor (PA Landers & various utility companies) will be working at the MassDOT project, Kings Highway.
 - Contractor (PA Landers) will be working on various streets, citywide, completing minor repairs and installations.
 - Contractor (PA Landers) will be working on sidewalk reconstruction on Union St from Sixth St to County St. Final top course paving tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 22nd.
 - Contractor (PA Landers) will be paving top course on Hazelwood Park tennis courts.
 - Contractor (SCR Constructors) will continue site work at the future South Coast Rail station platform locations in the city. (Church St at Carlisle St and Wamsutta St at Acushnet Ave.) If you have questions, please email the project team at SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us
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Southcoast Neediest Families Prize-a-Palooza Returns on Sunday Dec. 4th in New Bedford

The Southcoast Neediest Families Prize-a-Palooza will be held on Sunday, December 4th. 12p-8p at Whaler Inn and Suites 500 Hathaway Road New Bedford. **Stop by for an all day, family friendly, free admission, prize raffle event.** All food and prizes are donated by local (and some national) companies. There will be over 250 prizes to raffle off throughout the day every hour, as well as the **“Big Prize raffle”** that goes on all day. Some of the “Big Prizes” include a week long Maine House Rental, A book of scratch tickets valued at \$500 , an Ipad with a keyboard case and wireless mouse, a Meta-Quest Virtual Reality headset, A Michael Kors Handbag, a Nintendo Switch video game system, Red Sox tickets, Celtics tickets, An overnight stay at Bayside Resort, a suit from Professional Image, Avalon Spa treatments, unique liquor items such as a 19 Crimes Snoop Dog cooler and wine, a Tito’s ugly sweater set and much more.

Some of the Big Prize raffle items will be available to purchase on-line by clicking the attached link: https://neartail.com/public/115575994388615696979/all/form/1FAIpQLScnGELNR1x3NVbpgrBk3zNH4rW_DQNn-cZKCh0JTfo9HhopbQ

You can also scan the QR Code:



You do not need to be present to win but you will need to be available to pick up if you do win. Follow the event on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/747097016605053> to stay updated!

You can also win lots of other raffle prizes including: restaurant gift cards such as Servedwell (Joe's original, Black Whale and Cisco) cards, Lorenzo's, Bocca, Cask and Pig, Brewfish, Dillon's Restaurant, Lolly's Café, Spa Larimar gift card, liquor baskets, kids baskets, handmade items, lots and lots of gift baskets, gas cards, lottery tickets and so much more...

DJ Joe Lima will be back for the 8th year and volunteering his time, there will be a visit from Santa sometime between 1p and 4p and the kids can enjoy have face painting and crafts (and big kids too!). Spin the prize wheel that goes all day until the prizes run out; that's always a big hit!



We will have food throughout the day available for our guests. Food is donated by Joe's Original, Pa Raffa's, McDonalds (Kings Hway, Hathaway Road and Faunce Corner Road), GNB Voke, Dominos Pizza, MyPlace Restaurant, Palace Pizza, Little Phoenix, Ryan's Pub, and the Salvation Army.

All money raised goes to support children and families in need for the holidays through the Salvation Army. This year they have a goal of \$35,000 but they would love to hit \$40,000! The Salvation Army helps out over 2000 families in need for Christmas. The money raised would help provide food, toys and

clothing for between 300-400 children. This is our 8th year that the event has been run by **Southcoast Neediest Families Prize-a-Palooza** and the organization has been able to raise between \$25,000 and \$35,000 each year!

Can you help spread the word? They are still looking for Prize and food donors for this year's event. Any donor will be listed in our donor flyer and we are always willing to promote businesses by handing out business cards or any other provided materials. **Anyone wishing to donate can contact Kristen Lancaster at 774-263-1412 or by emailing neediest1970@gmail.com.** For more information and to stay up-to-date with prizes and information, check out their Facebook Page South Coast Neediest Families Prize-a-Palooza.



CMHS is hiring for Direct

Support Professionals in Greater New Bedford

Be a part of a company working together to help others and make a positive impact in people's lives.

Comprehensive Mental Health Systems, Inc. (CMHS, Inc.) is a human services agency seeking caring and motivated Direct Support Professionals to provide community based residential supports for individuals with disabilities in New Bedford, Dartmouth and Westport. By becoming a member of the CMHS team, you can learn new skills and ensure each individual home offers safety and rest, which allows each person we serve to have choice, control and feel at ease. Interested in applying? Click **HERE** to start your application: <https://www.cmhsma.org/employment/>

Full-Time (30+ Hours) and Part-Time (<30 Hours) 2nd shift positions available now!

Starting Wage: \$18.32 – Day Shift | \$1.10/hour wage increase on July 1st | \$2.32 or more/hour wage increase after 1 year of employment!

Benefits include, but not limited to:

- Pay increase after 1 year and increases commensurate with length of time with company
- Health Insurance (Tufts Health Plan) paid at 75% company cost
- Dental Insurance (Guardian Dental Plan) paid at 50% company cost
- Vacation and sick/personal time
- Holiday pay and double time paid for holidays worked

The role of a Direct Support Professional at CMHS includes the opportunity to:

- Participate as an active, positive member of the CMHS team

- Assist individuals with participation in social, community and recreational activities
- Promote wellness related activities in the home and the community
- Assist individuals with all activities of daily living as needed and indicated
- Understand, follow and adhere to company and worksite policy and procedure, related documentation and medical/clinical protocols
- Actively participate in the implementation of individual service plans
- Promote and ensure each individual home offers safety and rest that allows each person to have choice, control and feel at ease

Job Requirements:

*All applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent (documentation required), a valid driver's license and personal vehicle, and must pass an acceptable DPPC Registry screening, criminal history review (CORI), National Background check, Sex Offender (SORI), RMV screen and drug screening.

Interested in applying? Click [HERE](https://www.cmhsma.org/employment/) to start your application:
<https://www.cmhsma.org/employment/>



New Bedford's Mayor Mitchell files measure for improvement

fund for North End neighborhoods

“Mayor Jon Mitchell has filed a proposal with the City Council which would establish a revolving fund to receive 50% of all payments to the City pursuant to the Host Community Agreement (HCA) with Parallel Products affiliate Southcoast Renewables and SMRE 100, LLC.

The revolving fund will support public improvement projects such as playground and street-related upgrades in precincts 1D and 1E including Pine Hill Acres, Briarwood, and Sassaquin. The mayor has filed his proposal now so that the fund will be ready to receive payments to the City required under the HCA.

In July 2022, the City of New Bedford reached an HCA with Parallel Products that banned all biosolids from its processing facility in the New Bedford Business Park and required the company to pay the City a fee of \$2 per ton of waste processed at the enclosed municipal solid waste facility, if the project is successfully permitted. Payments made under the \$2 fee may total more than \$800,000 annually.

“We made clear from the start that any expansion must protect public health and safety, mitigate environmental risks, and offset the impact to nearby neighborhoods,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “By eliminating biosolids from the plan and securing significant financial benefits for neighbors, this agreement achieves those goals and more.”

“If the Parallel Products project receives permitting to proceed with its plans in the New Bedford Business Park, it is entirely appropriate that the adjacent neighborhoods receive compensation from the company for community-specific projects that improve everyone’s quality of life,” said City Council President Ian Abreu.

“The funds from Parallel Products will be used to address any issues that may arise. One area of concern is traffic in the area, especially on Braley Road,” said Ward 1 City Councilor Brad Markey. “We have started the planning process for the revitalization of Pulaski Park which includes an access road that will help alleviate the traffic issue from the Pulaski school and these funds will be a big help towards this.”

In addition to the biosolids ban and payments to the city, other benefits to New Bedford include a \$30 million investment that created 75 new jobs, more than \$200,000 in new annual tax revenue, and trucks banned from using Phillips Road when traveling to or from the facility.

The City Council Finance Committee will be considering the proposal at an upcoming meeting, to be scheduled.”

Untested rape kit leads to arrest of 48-year old man in 1994 Attleboro rape

“Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn’s Untested Rape Kit Initiative has resulted in another arrest connected to a decades old case involving a previously untested rape kit.

Eduardo Mendez, 48, was apprehended Tuesday night in New York City on an arrest warrant issued by our office for the 1994 violent rape of a woman in Attleboro.

The arrest warrant charges Mendez, who had been living in Attleboro in 1994, with aggravated rape. He is being charged

in New York City as being a fugitive from justice and it is unclear at this time whether he will fight rendition back to Massachusetts.



Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn photo.
The crime occurred on June 9, 1994 when the victim was

accosted by three men in Attleboro as she walked near the Pleasant Street Bridge in Attleboro. The three men forced her into the stairwell of a nearby building, covering her mouth as she attempted to scream. In the stairwell, two of the men held her down while the third violently raped her before fleeing the scene. The victim immediately reported the case to the police, who responded to the area but were unable to identify any of the suspects. At that location, however, they found the victim's purse. The victim provided a description of her assailants, noting that the man who had raped her had gold on his teeth. Despite her descriptions of the individuals who had assaulted her, no suspect was identified at that time. The victim was transported to Sturdy Hospital where she was treated and a sexual assault evidence collection kit (rape kit) was recovered.

That kit was one of more than at least 7,000 kits from throughout the state that was never fully tested by the state lab. However, after our office became aware of the scope and breadth of the problem with untested rape kits, we took action to obtain a federal grant. We then began the painstaking process of inventorying and prioritizing all untested rape kits in our county, and are now in the final stages of the process of getting all 1,148 previously untested Bristol County rape kits fully tested by a private lab under the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) grant obtained by District Attorney Quinn in 2019.

The renewed testing related to this case revealed a DNA profile that was then uploaded to the national CODIS system. That upload revealed a match to Eduardo Mendez, who was in the national system as a result of a conviction for a stabbing in New York later in the 1990s. In addition to the DNA match, the investigation has revealed that Mendez's physical description matches the one given by the victim and that he had lived just a few houses away from where the crime was committed. Investigators also learned that he has gold in his teeth.

In September of 2020, our office announced that an arrest warrant had been issued in this case, thanks to DA Quinn's Untested Rape Kit Initiative. For the past two years, state police detectives assigned to the district attorney's office, the Massachusetts State Police Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section, the state police's Unresolved Unit, Attleboro Police and the US Marshals have been actively searching for this defendant. On Tuesday, the defendant was apprehended in Brooklyn, NY by US Marshls, the New York City Sheriff's Office and New York City Police.

When notified of yesterday's arrest, the victim in the case was ecstatic and is fully on board with the prosecution of this case. She further indicated she was very relieved to hear the news, stating that even after more than 25 years, she is "still living with it." She also reported that she now feels a sense of relief because after so many years had passed, she had lost hope that the case would ever be solved.

If the rape kit had been fully tested by the state lab, it would have matched to this defendant decades ago. Without the institution of DA Quinn's Untested Rape Kit Initiative, this case may never would have been solved.

"I am extremely pleased that our rape kit testing initiative has already resulted in four separate cold case rapes being solved from more than a decade ago. All of these cases demonstrate the importance of fully testing all sexual assault kits. If we did not obtain the grant to have all these kits fully tested, this case may never have been solved," District Attorney Quinn said. "Victims, like the one in this case, who have been sexually assaulted have gone through a very traumatic experience and have a right to have these kits fully tested, especially when an assailant cannot be identified."

This case is one of four cold case rapes already solved as a result of DA Quinn's Untested Rape Kit Initiative and the office is optimistic more charges will be filed in other cases

as the private lab testing continues. Three of those the cases have been publicly announced, while the fourth still remains a sealed matter at this time.

The revelation that so many rape kits throughout the state were not being fully tested began shortly after a defendant by the name of John Loflin was convicted in late 2013 for the cold case 2002 murder of Marlene Rose in New Bedford. Loflin had previously been charged with a 1997 New Bedford rape, but the case was eventually dismissed after the alleged victim left the country. The alleged victim in that case submitted to a rape kit. That rape kit was sent up to the state lab three weeks after the rape, but unbeknownst to law enforcement, it had never been fully tested.

After Marlene Rose was murdered in 2002, DNA evidence was collected and sent to the state lab for testing. If the 1997 rape kit had been fully tested at the time, the Marlene Rose DNA evidence would have matched to that 1997 case and Loflin would have been arrested in connection to the Marlene Rose homicide. Instead, Loflin was not identified as the murderer of Rose until 2011 when he was arrested in Tennessee on unrelated charges. Loflin was compelled by Tennessee law to provide a DNA sample as a result of his criminal charges in that state. Once that DNA sample was uploaded to CODIS, it immediately matched with the 2002 DNA evidence connected to the murder of Marlene Rose. Loflin was then charged here in Bristol County with Marlene Rose's murder and was eventually convicted and sentenced to life in prison in November of 2013.

After learning about the 1997 rape case and discovering that the rape kit in that case had never been tested, our office began looking into other cold case rapes and attempted to determine whether there were other rape kits that were also not fully tested by the state lab. District Attorney Quinn poured a number of resources and man hours into this review. After inventorying many rape kits from all 20 of Bristol County's cities and towns, it began to become clear that there

were a great deal of rape kits that were not being fully tested. Our office then researched and applied for the federal SAKI grant. In October of 2018, our office was notified that our grant application was approved and that federal grant money would be awarded. In June of 2019, the federal grant money was deposited into the Bristol County District Attorney's Office account. We immediately used that grant money to hire a retired Massachusetts State Police detective to assist staff members in our office with training, inventorying and prioritizing the untested rape kits. Our office is the first District Attorney's office in the state to undertake this large-scale initiative and obtain the federal grant program.

After numerous delays due to Covid-19 and other issues with the state lab, the first batches of prioritized untested rape kits were sent to a private lab (Bode Laboratories) for testing in
Aphttps://www.newbedfordguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/eduardo_4232.jpggril of 2021. Although the testing got off to a slow start, we have been informed that all 1,148 previously untested rape kits will likely be fully tested by the private lab by the end of this year. Our office is optimistic that other cold case sexual assaults and other crimes will be solved as a result of this initiative.

The Bristol County District Attorney's office is the only office in the state to have undertaken this effort and will be the only county in the state to have all its untested rape kits fully tested by the end of this year.

"During the investigation of a cold case homicide we discovered that more than 1,100 rape kits in our county had not been fully tested. This was totally unacceptable, especially for victims, the public and law enforcement who believed these kits were being fully tested. I immediately dedicated office resources so that every rape kit would now be fully tested to help identify perpetrators who had remained

uncharged,” District Attorney Quinn said. “I am optimistic there are other cases that will be solved as a result of our rape kit initiative. Our office discovered a major problem, took action and devoted an immense amount of resources to it, and is now in the process of solving it.””