

Massachusetts public health officials confirm fourth death from a vaping-associated lung injury

A fourth person has died of a vaping-associated lung injury, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today. The patient, a man in his 70s from Middlesex County, reported vaping tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an ingredient found in marijuana. The case is among the 36 confirmed cases of e-cigarette or vaping-associated lung injury (EVALI) that DPH has reported to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since September 11, 2019, when the state began requiring clinicians to report any unexplained lung injury in a patient to the department.

Since the state began mandating the report, DPH has received 341 reports from clinicians of suspected vaping-associated lung injuries. Of those, 109 cases of EVALI have been identified, with 36 confirmed cases and 73 probable cases reported to the CDC.

“Today’s news is a tragic reminder that we must remain vigilant about the dangers of vaping,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “There are resources available to help people quit and we encourage anyone to use these resources.”

In November, DPH reported the death of a man in his 50s from Worcester County who reported vaping both nicotine and THC. In October, the state reported the vaping-associated lung injury deaths of a woman in her 40s from Middlesex County and a woman in her 60s from Hampshire County, both of whom vaped nicotine.

In December, the state’s Public Health Council approved new

regulations that restrict the sale of nicotine vaping and flavored vaping and tobacco products. This action followed the Legislature's passing and Governor Charlie Baker's signing into law an Act Modernizing Tobacco Control, which provided DPH with additional authority to regulate access to tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery systems, including vapes.

The state's Cannabis Control Commission has also taken steps to strengthen its regulation of marijuana vaping products. As part of an ongoing investigation to determine whether Massachusetts licensees may be connected to lung injury cases, the Commission has entered into a data-sharing agreement with DPH and continues to test samples of quarantined vaping products. So far Independent Testing Labs have not found detectable levels of vitamin E acetate in products manufactured by licensed Marijuana Establishments or Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers. The US Centers for Disease Control has identified vitamin E acetate as a chemical of concern among people with e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury.

The Commission maintains a quarantine order on all marijuana vaporizer products, except for devices used exclusively to vape flower that were manufactured by licensees prior to December 12, 2019. Newly manufactured vaping products are authorized to be sold only after they have passed tests for the presence of impermissible levels of toxicants or contaminants, including vitamin E acetate and heavy metals.

Of the 109 Massachusetts confirmed or probable cases that have been reported to the CDC, 55 are male and 54 are female. Fifty-two percent are under the age of 30. Thirty-five percent vaped only nicotine, 40 percent vaped only THC, and 27 percent reported vaping nicotine and THC. DPH's online dashboard posted weekly provides detailed information on vaping cases that the Department has reported to the CDC.

DPH offers resources to help people quit through the

Massachusetts Smoker's Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or by visiting makesmokinghistory.org or Mass.gov/QuitVaping to connect to treatment. The Helpline has doubled the availability of free over-the-counter nicotine replacement products from 4 weeks to 8 weeks, once a person receives counseling by phone.

As of January 1, 2020, Massachusetts commercial health insurance plans, plus the Group Insurance Commission and MassHealth, must cover smoking cessation counseling and FDA-approved products such as gum, lozenges, or patches without cost-sharing.

Two New Bedford City Councilors come out against Massachusetts becoming a Sanctuary State

New Bedford City Council President Joe Lopes and City Councilor Naomi Carney have filed a written motion "requesting that New Bedford City Council go on record against Massachusetts House Bill 3573 and Senate Bill 1401 which would establish Massachusetts as a Sanctuary State."

In 2018, New Bedford State Senator Mark Montigny voted in favor of making Massachusetts a Sanctuary State.

Here is the current House Bill:

H3573

Here is the current Senate Bill:

Beacon Compassion's recreational marijuana agreement to be reviewed by New Bedford City Council on Thursday

Beacon Compassion's recreational marijuana host city draft agreement is scheduled to be reviewed by New Bedford City Council on Thursday. The agreement has already been reviewed and received a favorable recommendation by the Special Committee on Cannabis Regulation & Host Community Agreement Review on September 26, 2019.

Beacon Compassion is hoping to open a recreational marijuana retail business at 366 Hathaway Road in New Bedford. Currently, New Bedford does not have a retail store that sells recreational marijuana although several have applied.

01.09.2020_REPORT_-_1ST_AMENDMENT_BEACON_COMPASSION_INC.

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New Bedford City Council to take up single-use plastic bag ban on Thursday

On Thursday, the New Bedford City Council will take up a single-use plastic bag ban. If passed, the ordinance will require businesses with a retail space of 10,000 square feet or greater or with at least two locations in New Bedford to eliminate single-use plastic bags within 6 months. Businesses will face fines of \$100 to \$300.

The proposed ordinance reads as follows:

01.09.2020_AN_ORDINANCE_-_RELATIVE_TO_PLASTIC_BAGS

New Bedford's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study is underway!

The City of New Bedford Department of City Planning (DCP), with assistance from Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD), is holding a public meeting on January 14, 2020, for the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study. Public feedback is needed to shape the City in preparation for the arrival of commuter rail service.

SRPEDD is conducting a study of existing and future conditions for the areas surrounding the North New Bedford (Church Street) and New Bedford (Whales Tooth) platforms. The project team will first evaluate existing conditions and then present

findings to the public to gather input through multiple outlets. The project team will then craft recommendations using public input to shape the neighborhoods surrounding future platforms.

The Department of City Planning is holding a public meeting to gather feedback and opinions on existing conditions and desired future development for both locations. Public feedback is needed to shape the City in preparation for the arrival of commuter rail service!

The meeting date and time: Tuesday, January 14, 2020 from 6pm – 8pm at the New Bedford Public Library. The library is located at 613 Pleasant St, New Bedford, MA 02740. Please note that the meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities.

Make sure to visit the project website (www.srpedd.org/New-Bedford-TOD-Study) for more information about the study, to fill out a public survey, to leave a comment, and to connect with the project team.

New Bedford's Mayor Mitchell requesting approval of \$628,156 to lease seven snow vehicles

Mayor Mitchell is requesting that the New Bedford City Council approve a loan of \$628,156 to lease seven snow vehicles and a lift. Mayor Mitchell has stated the goal is to modernize the fleet of vehicles and be better prepared to respond to the

needs of the city. The communication will be taking up by the city council on Thursday, January 9th.

Full communication between the mayor and the city council:

Communication-Order-Capital_Lease-DFFM_Purchase_of_Vehicles

Family seeks public's help in finding New Bedford woman last seen on Dec. 21

"My cousin is missing. She left one day (in the middle of the day) and just hasn't been seen since! Her cell phone is dead and cannot be tracked. We don't know if she is in danger or not. If seen contact 401-403-1842." Amy Gill.

MISSING!!

NAME: Kendra Nicole Bianco

Missing Since: December 21st, 2019

DOB: July 25, 2000 Age: 19

Sex: Female

Race: White

Eyes: Hazel

Hair Color: Blonde/ Dirty Blonde/ Red

Weight: 140

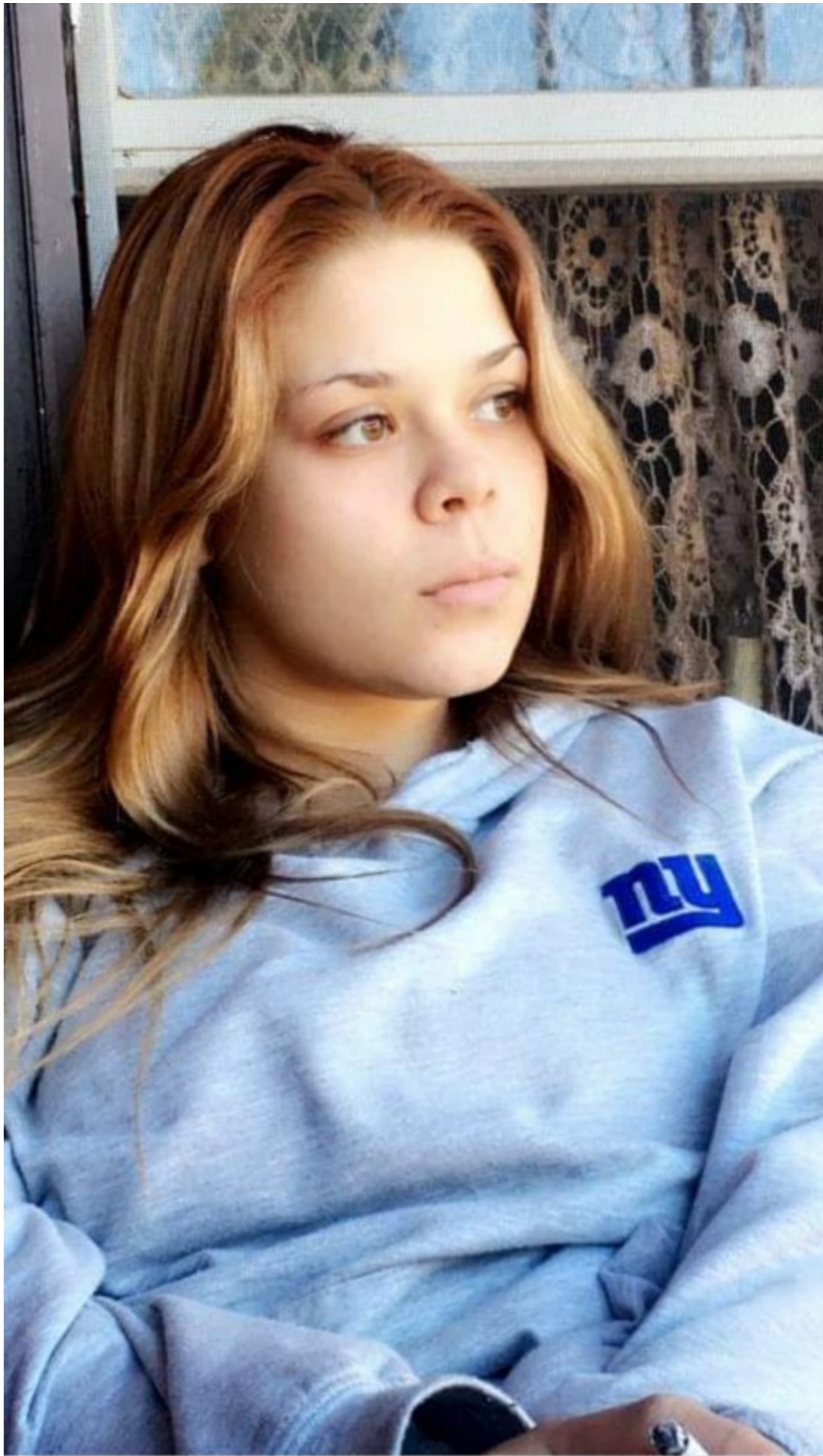
Height: 5'3

Tattoos: Koy Fish left forearm, family
over everything on chest with doves

Wearing Last: Grey sweatpants &
white tank top

Last Seen: Mendon Rd area in Woonsocket, RI





Lakeville Firefighters respond to car crash on Rt. 140

"Your Lakeville Firefighters responded to a motor vehicle crash today, just before 1 pm. The crash occurred on Rt. 140 south, in the area of the County Road exit.

The unrestrained lone occupant was transported to the trauma center at Good Samaritan Hospital with what were discovered to be significant injuries.

On duty Lakeville Firefighters received significant support from firefighters called back to duty. Great team effort!" - Lakeville Fire Department.



Taunton Man Who Indecently Assaulted Disabled Girl Sentenced to Prison

A 47-year-old Taunton man who indecently assaulted a young intellectually disabled girl in 2017 has been sentenced to serve 12 to 15 years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Christopher Dewhurst pleaded guilty on December 30 in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging him with one count of assault to rape a person under 16 and three counts of indecent assault and battery on an intellectually disabled person.

On the evening in October 6, 2017, the defendant was taking care of the victim and her siblings while the victim's mother was having dinner with friends. When the mother arrived back home, she found the defendant naked on a bed with the victim. The mother immediately called the police and the defendant was placed under arrest. During the ensuing investigation, the defendant's DNA (saliva) was located on the victim's breast and in her underwear.

In addition to imposing the 12 to 15-year state prison, Judge Debra Squires-Lee also placed the defendant on supervised probation for an additional 10 years. The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Thompson.

"The defendant took advantage of his developmentally disabled relative to sexually assault her. This conduct is reprehensible and the lengthy prison sentence was more than justified," District Attorney Quinn said.

New Bedford cold weather overflow shelter open tonight, January 07

Due to the expected weather conditions, coupled with low feel like temps through the evening, the overflow will be opened again tonight. All inquiries can be forwarded to Sister Rose House and 1-800-homeless.

All guests should plan to arrive for 6:00pm and the cutoff time will be 8:30pm. Dinner will be served between 6:00pm and 7:30pm and we wrap up between 9:45pm and 10pm.

As a reminder, the overflow will be activated on nights that the temperature is expected to be at 28 degrees or less. If the temperature were to drop below 28 at 4 or 5:00am rather than 7 or 8:00pm as an example, it doesn't ensure that the overflow would open. All guests are expected to get up at 5:00 am and exit the premises by 6 or 7:00am.

Also, precipitation or snow alone doesn't ensure that the overflow will open but are taken into consideration coupled with the temperatures. We also view the feel like temps, so as an example if the temperature was expected to be at 30 degrees but the wind-chill coupled with rain or snow presents or "feels like" 25 degrees then the overflow would be activated.

Every year we always have grey area days but we do the best in our judgment to make the right call. On days that we are expected to open an email blast will be sent by 12pm.

Also, 1-800-homeless will notify any callers if the overflow will be open on expected days. This will be our 4th season and

with all the challenges at any given time, we are hopeful to continue safe operations and save lives, especially on the coldest nights. We also are looking for extra help, especially if the number of guests expected on any given night reaches 30. We also have 25 guests on the main floor so manpower is very important.