



**OFFICE OF THE CORONER
COUNTY OF CHESTER**
Coroner: Christina VandePol, M.D.

“Committed Service and
Responsiveness”

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Press Release
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The Chester County Coroner's Office has identified a new substance, xylazine, during investigation of two overdose deaths in Chester County in January 2019. Bradley Bailey, 26, of Bradford County, died January 1, 2019, of combined drug intoxication with xylazine, fentanyl, acetyl fentanyl, and mitragynine. The death is being investigated by the West Goshen Police Department. Ian Stahl, 27, of East Marlborough Township, died January 6, 2019, of acute multiple drug intoxication with cocaine, fentanyl, xylazine, and acetyl fentanyl. His death is being investigated by the Pennsylvania State Police, Avondale. In both cases, the Coroner's Office certified the manner of death as accidental.

Xylazine is a non-opioid sedative, analgesic, and anesthetic agent approved for veterinary use in horses and some other large animals. It causes central nervous system depression which can result in slowing of the respiratory rate and partial heart block. Brand names include Anased® and Rompun®. Rose Nolen-Walston, DVM, Associate Professor, Large Animal Internal Medicine, at the New Bolton Center in Chester County confirmed that xylazine is used "all the time" in large animals and that it is not a controlled substance. Dr. Nolen-Walston identified a 2014 review in the journal *Forensic Science International* which characterized xylazine as "an emerging adulterant in abused drugs."

Xylazine has never before been identified in toxicological tests in drug overdose deaths in Chester County. It has previously been reported as a drug of abuse in Puerto Rico in 2012, where it had the nickname "anestecia de caballo" or horse anesthetic. In November 2018, a large quantity of xylazine was found in an illicit drug seizure in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Chester County Coroner Christina VandePol, M.D., said, "This readily available large animal sedative represents a new threat on the streets. If you're using illicit drugs or treating someone with a possible overdose, you really have no idea what you're dealing with. I urge those who use xylazine in a veterinary practice or on a horse farm to be aware of its potential diversion and abuse and to monitor any supply they may have on hand."

The Chester County Coroner's Office is an independent agency serving the citizens and honoring the deceased of the county by investigating the facts and circumstances concerning jurisdictional deaths within Chester County. We determine the cause and manner of death, the identity of the decedent, and provide notification to the legal next of kin, while exhibiting the highest degree of compassion, professionalism, and integrity.