

# Chama Mayor Resigns

By Amanda Martinez  
SUN Staff Writer

After eight months as the mayor of the Village of Chama, Ron Russom resigned, Aug. 16.

Two days later, on Aug. 18, Village Councilor Milnor Manzanares also resigned.

Both Russom and Manzanares submitted letters of resignation.

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Russom

# Police Chief Put on Admin. Leave

Mayor will allow Matthew Vigil to retire, following Taos indictments

By Wheeler Cowperthwaite  
SUN Staff Writer

Española’s police chief will keep his job until the end of the month, following felony indictments in two cases, in Taos.

Mayor Alice Lucero said she placed Matthew Vigil on administrative leave with pay on Aug. 17 and he will stay on the city payroll until the end of the month, so he can get his retirement in order.

A Taos grand jury indicted him, Aug. 17, on charges of child abuse and witness intimidation in two separate cases.

Vigil was set to be arraigned at 1:15 p.m., Aug. 28, in Taos District Court on charges of intimidation of



(SUNfoto by Austin Fisher)

Police Chief Matthew Vigil walks to the podium, May 10, during a city council meeting. Mayor Alice Lucero put Vigil on administrative leave with pay until the end of the month, after he was indicted by a Taos grand jury on felony child abuse charges.

a witness to give a report, intimidation of a witness to give false testimony, child abuse and misdemeanor battery against a household member stemming from an

Oct. 30, 2016 involving his wife, Vicki Vigil, and her children.

That original hearing, for which Vigil was issued a summons, has been vacated. No new hearing has

been set, according to online court records.

He was also set to be arraigned, at the same time, on charges of child abuse and misdemeanor interference with communications, after he allegedly threw a shoe at his daughter’s face on March 31, 2017, at the Big 5 in Taos.

The hearing in that case was also vacated.

Taos District Judge Jeff McElroy wrote that all the sitting judges in Taos were “automatically recused” in the case and asked the court clerk to petition the New Mexico Supreme Court to assign a judge.

Lucero said in a Monday telephone interview, that she named Eric Gallant, formerly the interim deputy police chief, as the acting police chief until the next city council meeting on Aug. 29.

In the meantime, Matthew Vigil will be allowed to draw a paycheck from the city until he is able

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# 31 Die In 2016 From Overdoses

By Wheeler Cowperthwaite  
SUN Staff Writer

Jose Muñoz-Garcia had been shooting up heroin since he was 17.

On May 15, 2016, at the age of 23, he was found dead in his room, at his mother’s Alcalde residence, with heroin needles nearby, and it would later be determined that he died from an overdose of heroin, codeine and alprazolam.

His mother, Adriana Muñoz, went to check on him and found his door was locked and he wasn’t answering, so she asked a neighbor to break down the door, she said in an Aug. 11 interview. Muñoz-Garcia’s cousin, Aida Saucedo, interpreted for her during the interview.

Muñoz-Garcia was just one of 31 total fatal overdose deaths in 2016 — a number that is below the high mark of 39 deaths in 2014, but above the former peak of 26 deaths in 2012 and 2007.

Heroin was involved in 23 — a majority of the deaths. In all but one of those deaths, it was heroin, combined with something else, that caused the fatal overdose. Alcohol was involved in 11 of the 23 heroin deaths and the combination of just heroin and alcohol killed six people.

Heroin was not, however, involved in the most deaths. That recognition goes to opiates, the class of drugs that includes heroin.

Opiates come in a variety of drugs, including the illicit, like heroin and opium. Most opiates are prescribed, including fentanyl, one of the most powerful and deadly opiates, involved in one death this year.

Some of the other prescription painkillers include oxycodone and hydrocodone, as well as Suboxone and methadone, the two drugs used to treat opiate addiction through replacement therapy.

Twenty-eight of the 31 overdoses in 2016 were at least partially caused by opiates.

The two drugs used to treat opiate and heroin addiction, methadone and Suboxone, were involved in four and two deaths, respectively.

Methadone is a powerful opiate, like heroin, while buprenorphine, the opiate that makes up Suboxone, is a partial antagonist.

That means that it is not as powerful as its full-opiate cousins, methadone and heroin. Suboxone is a combination of buprenorphine and naloxone, known by the brand name Narcan.

The third-most prolific drug involved in the fatal overdoses was alcohol, which led, when combined with other drugs, to 17 total deaths. According to autopsy reports, alcohol is a depressant that, when combined with other

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# Break out the Roasters, It’s Chile Time Again

By Amanda Martinez  
SUN Staff Writer

Outside of Center Market, David Bourger watched as his 40-pound burlap sack of extra-hot green *chile* was dumped into a roaster.

The flame, powered by a 500-gallon propane tank, flickered on and hit the skin of the *chile*, releasing their distinctive, warm, burnt aroma into the air.

Bourger, speaking loudly to break through the sound of the roaster’s electric motor and the hiss of the propane, said the first thing he plans to make with his green *chile* this year, is *calabacitas*.

“I put yellow squash, green squash, I put roasted corn and then I add green *chile* and I add a little bit of butter,” he said.

Then, he plans to bag the rest of it, freeze it and give some to his family who moved out of New Mexico.

“I have a son who lives in Colorado, so what I will do is, I will take the extra bags that are already prepared and I will take them to him,” Bourger said.

Center Market General Manager Efrain Rafael, who has worked at the store for 23 years, said this year the store is selling *chile* grown in Socorro, instead of Hatch.

Last year, he drove to Hatch about eight times and each time, picked up about 450 sacks of *chile*.



(SUNfoto by Amanda Martinez)

This year is Flavio Lazcano’s 11th season roasting *chile* in front of Center Market. He said that the smell of *chile* roasting in front of the store makes people hungry and they want to take the *chile* home and taste it as soon as possible.

He made a deal with a farm in Socorro to deliver it to the store, which will guarantee they will have fresh *chile* continuously available for the entire season, which usually lasts through September.

Although thousands of sacks are sold at Center Market, Rafael

said the *chile* sales do not make any profit for the store.

“None,” he said. “It’s mostly for the customers because you have to pay for the propane, labor, for time. There’s not much room for profit.”

Jacob Romero, who owns Romero’s Fruit Stand in Hernan-

dez, said that although the store opened in 1983, his mom and dad, Jake and Clarabelle Romero, began selling *chile* on the side of the road in the 1970s.

Now, the store sells *chile* year-round. First, they sell *chile* from Hatch and Socorro, then, through the winter months, they sell *chile*

from Mexico and different parts of South America.

Romero said the thing that keeps his customers coming back, is his staff’s attention to detail throughout the entire roasting process.

Instead of emptying the fresh sack of *chile* straight into the roaster, the employees dump each sack into a black, plastic basket and rinse it with water, to make sure it is free of all dirt, leaves and debris.

He said this is especially important to do in years like this one, when there is so much rain, because the mud from the fields will stick to the *chile*.

“The people who roast *chile* have been with me over 15 years, so they are experienced *chile* roasters,” he said.

It takes patience and skill to get the perfect taste.

“You have to be like a chef,” Romero said. “You can’t just throw the *chile* in the machine and expect it to roast.”

Getting the heat of the flame right is especially important.

“The thicker the *chile*, the higher the flame,” he said. “Then you turn it down at the end, so you get a good blister, so it is easier to peel.”

Romero said it is hard to gauge how many sacks of *chile* are sold at the store each year because they sell it year-round and from several different farms.

See ‘Chile’ on page A3

# Teacher Shortage Means 21 Subs Start School Year

By Barron Jones  
SUN Staff Writer

Usually the first week of school is a time for students to meet and get to know the teachers who will guide them through the academic year, but some Española School District students will have to wait a bit longer to meet their permanent instructors.

District officials are in need of 21 certified teachers to replace the substitutes who are currently teaching classes at various school sites.

Substitutes are currently providing instruction to students at various sites, including San Juan Elementary, Alcalde El-

ementary, Española Elementary, Española Middle and Española Valley High School.

Deputy Superintendent Leslie Romero-Kilmer told Board members, during a brief Aug. 16 presentation, that finding certified teachers to replace the substitutes is Human Resources Director Esther Romero’s main focus.

“Just know this is our top priority,” Romero-Kilmer said. “I don’t know when they will have a highly qualified teacher, but it is a top priority.”

## Fixing the problem

School officials, in an effort to meet the staffing needs at the high school, have

started buying prep periods from District teachers. Selling a prep period can add between \$5,000 and \$7,000 to a teacher’s salary. Teachers can only sell one prep period per school year.

Gutierrez said the money will come from the direct-instruction line item from the District’s Operational Fund.

“Since we have not been able to hire for the positions, that money pays for the purchase of prep periods,” she said.

Those who opt to sell their prep period will teach a class during that time instead of grading papers, researching assignments or developing lesson plans.

Gutierrez said many teachers already spend their time doing homework to pre-

pare for class, so for some teachers, losing the time to prepare won’t have too much of an impact.

“It is a teacher’s option to sell their preparation period, and this is a common practice in secondary schools,” she said. “In selling their preparation period, a teacher understands that they will have to plan and prepare on their own time, which most of our teachers do a fair amount of, anyway.”

Critics of the practice believe teachers who sell their prep periods are placed at a disadvantage, that will eventually trickle down to the classroom and interfere with

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# Number of ODs Increased by Eight, from 2015

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drugs, can have an additive effect.

Overdoses caused solely by alcohol were not counted for this story.

Cocaine, a stimulant, was involved in 12 deaths. Only one person died from an overdose of just cocaine.

The next class of drugs that showed up the most, with other substances, was benzodiazepines.

That class of drug, often just called “benzos,” includes the anti-anxiety and anti-depressant alprazolam (brand name Xanax) and the painkiller and anti-anxiety drug diazepam (brand name Valium). A total of seven deaths involved benzodiazepines, including three with alprazolam and three with diazepam.

Benzodiazepines, just like alcohol and opiates, suppress the central nervous system, to include breathing.

Muñoz-Garcia was one of the deaths where a benzodiazepine, specifically, alprazolam, was combined with other drugs to cause the fatal overdose.

The *Rio Grande SUN* reviewed 100 autopsy reports produced by the Office of the Medical Investigator, following a public records request, as part of the *SUN*’s annual review of overdose deaths in Rio Arriba County.

The review does not include deaths that happened in the Jicarilla Apache Nation or in Santa Fe County, even if they happened within Española city limits. Santa Fe County includes parts of Chimayó and Santa Cruz, as well.

This review includes, for the first time, two deaths that occurred in Santa Clara.

Previous reviews of overdose deaths have not included any deaths that occurred on tribal land.

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs investigated two fatal overdoses in Santa Clara and wrote in response to a records request, that they did not investigate any overdose deaths in Ohkay Owingeh.

The Bureau also wrote that they do not investigate overdose deaths in the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

Having the Bureau investigate overdose deaths is a decision that is left up to tribal police and the tribes are not beholden to records requests.

For every death (listed on pages A8-A9), a pathologist concluded the consumption of drugs was the cause of death and determined the death was accidental.

The review only counted unintentional overdoses. The Medical Investigator concluded that three overdose deaths in 2016 were suicides.

One additional death, that of Larry Archuleta, 59, of Ojo Sarco, was not counted. According to his autopsy report, he died from a gastrointestinal bleed, caused by an overdose of morphine.

The pathologists read police reports, medical histories and inventories of the death scenes, as well as inventories of the bodies. Investigators with the Office also do their own investigations in conjunction with police. Toxicology tests of the deceased’s blood are done, as well as the autopsy itself, to determine the manner, means and cause of death.

## Caught in ‘multiple’ worlds

One of those deaths in Santa Clara, that of Jenny Bourdon, 30, was caused solely by methadone.

A Bureau of Indian Affairs investigator wrote that she did not have a prescription for methadone, although she was known to use heroin. The investigator’s name was redacted from all the reports, by the Bureau.

Her parents, Fred and Birdell Bourdon, said their daughter felt like a woman caught between multiple worlds, with no oppor-



**Birdell (left) and Fred Bourdon hold,** July 26, at their trailer in Española, a collage of pictures of their daughter. Their daughter, Jenny Bourdon, 30, died from a methadone overdose in 2016. Although they suspect foul play, the Bureau of Indian Affairs closed her case as an accidental overdose.

tunities in either.

“She was doing drugs since junior high school,” Birdell Bourdon said. “She tried to get away, but it didn’t happen. There was (sic) too much drugs here.”

She dropped out of the eighth grade.

At 18, their daughter tried to change her life by attending a boot camp program in Roswell, then got her high school equivalency diploma.

“No jobs, no future, no money,” Birdell Bourdon said, referring to her daughter’s situation.

Soon, Jenny Bourdon was homeless, drifting between couches at her family members’ houses.

By then, the Bourdons were in a dispute with Santa Clara, over land, which resulted in their eviction from a small plot where they had a trailer. When Jenny Bourdon died, she was living with other family members in Santa Clara.

“She was a victim of circumstance,” Birdell Bourdon said. “She tried. Everything was all barred to her. There was no help.”

In the past few years, Jenny Bourdon was accused of being a police informant, after her romantic involvement with an unnamed drug dealer, Birdell Bourdon said.

“They started calling her a *ratta*,” she said.

Birdell and Fred Bourdon said they thought their daughter had been killed, but, like every other overdose in the County, except the suicides, her death was declared an accident.

## Peer pressure

Adriana Muñoz said her son started doing heroin as a result of peer pressure.

Everyone around him was using and got him to use, as well.

Muñoz tried to help her son overcome his addiction for many years.

“He had a lot of help from various people,” she said.

On Dec. 3, 2015, Muñoz-García wanted to get clean and had his family take him to a faith-based rehabilitation center in Albuquerque.

He was there for three months and left on Feb. 20, 2016. He

left after coming into conflict with a new resident.

“After his three months in Albuquerque, he stepped out a whole new person,” she said.

When Muñoz-García went into rehab, he was “just bones” and when he came out, he was filled out, “*gordito*,” Muñoz said.

When he came home to Alcalde, he was lethargic and did not want to work, but a few months in, he found a job, started cutting weeds and feeling better about himself — but it only lasted so long.

Three days before his death, he told Muñoz that something had to change.

“He didn’t know what was going on, but he needed to leave, and maybe go to Mexico, or, he said, ‘Maybe I’m going to die.’”

She said that Muñoz-García had been clean for three months leading up to his death, but he decided to use again for some reason.

She suspected he took the same dose that he was used to when he was using, which caused the overdose.

The longer someone is clean, the more their tolerance for opiates or other drugs goes down. When they use the same amount as before they quit, this often leads to an overdose.

She said her son was a good man who helped the elderly, was kind, caring and giving.

As a deeply religious man, he helped introduce his mother to religion, something that she now uses to console herself, after the loss of her son.

She went so far as to become a certified chaplain and now walks Española’s streets, trying to bring religion to drug users.

Muñoz-García’s sister, Bianca Gutierrez, said her brother was never aggressive and wonderful with his three nieces.

## By the numbers

The number of fatal overdoses in 2015 was 23, it was 39 in 2014, 24 in 2013, 26 in 2012, 23 in 201, 16 in 2010, 17 in 2009, 25 in 2008 and 26 in 2007.

Rio Arriba County’s per capita rate is 77.4 deaths per 100,000 people. Per capita rates are used to compare populations of dif-

fering sizes, to national rates.

The rate of 77.4 deaths is higher than the County’s rate last year, of 61 deaths per 100,000 and higher than the state’s 2016 per capita rate of 24.8.

The state’s per capita rate was the same in 2015, at 24.8.

Española continues to have the higher fatal overdose rate of 98.6 per 100,000. In 2015, the city had 11 deaths, which pushed its per capita rate up to 109 per 100,000.

Española’s per capita rate is 75 percent higher than the state’s and Rio Arriba County’s is 68 percent higher. In 2016, a total of 497 people died from overdoses in New Mexico.

This year, no deaths in city limits were a result of someone being brought to, or left at, the Española Hospital.

The per capita rates were calculated using the U.S. Census Bureau’s population data estimates for 2016.

To put Rio Arriba and Española’s overdose rate into perspective, take the example of New York.

According to a New York Department of Health report, in 2016, 1,374 people died from fatal drug overdoses — an increase of 46 percent over the previous year.

According to the Census Bureau’s data, New York’s population is 8.5 million, which puts their per capita, or per 100,000, rate of deaths at 16.1.

If New York had Rio Arriba County’s fatal overdose rate, 6,609 people would have died in 2016. If New York had Española’s overdose rate, they would have had 8,420 fatal overdoses in 2016.

## System of care

County Health and Human Services Director Lauren Reichelt is using a grant over five years, worth \$2.5 million, in an attempt to set up a comprehensive system of providers, to increase the treatment capacity and offer an alternative to inpatient treatment.

Española Police Department officers and Rio Arriba County Sheriff’s deputies have been dropping off addicts, at her

Fatal Overdoses By Year	
2016.....	31
2015.....	23
2014.....	39
2013.....	24
2012.....	26
2011.....	23
2010.....	16
2009.....	17
2008.....	25
2007.....	26.

Health Commons office, in search of treatment, but there is little room for an influx of patients.

However, by creating a cohesive system of intensive outpatient treatment, coupled with case management and medication-assisted treatment, she can greatly increase treatment capacity.

Medication-assisted treatment, which involves prescribing patients methadone or Suboxone, has become much easier, after caps and restrictions on Suboxone prescriptions were eliminated at the federal level.

In addition to doctors, nurse practitioners and physicians’ assistants can now prescribe Suboxone, after receiving a waiver from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. That comes after a July 8, 2016 rule change by the Administration, which also raised the cap on the number of patients taking Suboxone that each provider can oversee, from 100 to 275.

“That is a huge expansion of capacity,” Reichelt said. “This year, we’re (working on) training and being consistent with (our) protocols.”

She is trying to create a system of protocols for prescribing medication and going forward with counseling and therapy so that every patient, moving between multiple providers, will be treated the same.

“(Medication-assisted treatment) needs to be combined with some pretty intensive therapy (and intensive outpatient treatment) will certainly do it,” Reichelt said.

Once the system is finally working, she said the area can expand its capacity from 60 to 70 beds in in-patient programs, to several hundred additional slots for those in intensive outpatient treatment.

“We cannot just rely on residential (treatment)” she said.

One of the hurdles Reichelt is trying to get over is the information technology infrastructure, which she has been paying for with the grant. Moving records between organizations requires a technological answer, as well as a legal one.

Another chunk of the money, \$500,000 each year, is being spent to pay experts on various topics, including medical record privacy and giving advice on how to properly set up a system where the patients move between providers.

“The full medical record isn’t going to be passed along,” she said. “It will be enough (information) to provide seamless service.”

While her staff is helping the people dropped off by law enforcement to get treatment, it also creates a more chaotic environment.

“It’s sort of like trying to calm down a room of kindergartners after a large bang and the ceiling collapses,” Reichelt said.

Moving forward, she wants to start working with the district court to provide treatment services to people in that system.

She already has agreements in place with the Española Municipal Court and the Rio Arriba County Magistrate Court.

Harm Reduction Program Manager Phillip Fiuty, working at the Santa Fe Mountain Center, said he hopes the first patients under Reichelt’s new system will be seen within the next few months.

While New Mexico and Rio

Arriba County are years ahead of other states when it comes to harm reduction, it will still take a large amount of change to move forward.

With Reichelt’s program, Fiuty sees an incredible potential for change.

“I think that the community is potentially at a really good place to turn around and start a healing process and move toward some stability,” he said. “I say that because the people we were dealing with in harm reduction 20 years ago, they had recollections of a time when the community wasn’t in the condition it is today.”

He said there was a lot of longing for the past and a sense that something great had slipped away.

“Nearly 50 percent of the participants in our program are 30 or under,” he said. “I don’t get a sense of mourning (for the past) from them. I get a sense that they are very open to things changing or open to new possibilities.”

## Harm reduction efforts

Reichelt said state and local efforts to distribute naloxone helped bring down the overdose rate from 2014’s high of 39 deaths, and stabilize it.

Other places in the country are seeing much larger increases in the number of deaths than either New Mexico or Rio Arriba County, she said.

“We got a bunch of Narcan out there and it’s depressed the (fatality rate),” she said.

Reichelt is providing Rio Arriba County Sheriff’s deputies and Española Police Department officers with Narcan, since they are often the first to arrive at the scene of an overdose.

“We’re getting tons of Narcan,” she said. “Narcan is not an issue.”

Fiuty said naloxone distribution has evened out, after the state law changed in July 2016, allowing open distribution of it.

That 2016 law change allowed groups like the Santa Fe Mountain Center, which runs the needle exchange van in Rio Arriba County and northern Santa Fe County, to give it out without a prescription.

“The number of people receiving (naloxone) doubled from 465 in (2014) to 726 in 2016, then nearly doubled (again) to 1,214 in 2016,” Fiuty said. Those numbers refer to fiscal, rather than calendar years.

Once the legislation took effect, the amount of naloxone being distributed jumped from five people a week to 20-30 people a day, but after a few months, distribution leveled out again.

“Now we get six to eight people a day, but sometimes that spikes to as many as 15 to 20,” Fiuty said.

For Fiscal Year 2016, 752 overdose reversals were reported to the Center, while for FY 2017, 670 were reported.

While the number of overdose reversals demonstrates how many lives could be lost if naloxone was not available, the Santa Fe Mountain Center also distributes millions of needles and takes them back off the streets.

This is another facet of harm reduction, intended to prevent the spread of blood borne disease like HIV and Hepatitis C.

The syringe exchanges are now taking in more needles than they are giving out.

In FY 2014, 973,738 syringes were collected and just over one million were given out. In FY 2015, 1.06 million were collected and 1.07 million were given out.

In FY 2016, 1.28 million syringes were collected while 1.258 million were given out and in FY 2017, 1.43 million syringes were collected and 1.39 million were given out.

# 2016 OVERDOSE DEATHS AND CAUSES

The following 31 people died of drug overdoses in Rio Arriba County in 2016. In each of these cases, the manner of death was listed as an accident by the Office of the Medical Investigator pathologist, who conducted the autopsy or wrote the autopsy report.

An additional three deaths were classified as suicides and one death was classified as an accident caused by natural diseases or means, to which an overdose was a contributing factor.

This list does not include deaths that happened in Santa Fe County, which includes parts of Española, Chimayó and Santa Cruz.

Two deaths this year happened on the Santa Clara Pueblo and were investigated by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In past years, Santa Clara Pueblo has not been counted. The Bureau did not investigate any deaths in Ohkay Owingeh and does not handle the reports in the Jicarilla Apache Nation. As a sovereign nation, it does not have to release autopsy records.

Although the Bureau investigated two deaths in Santa Clara, handing those investigations over to the Bureau is at the discretion of the tribal police officers handling the case.

All information below came from documents provided by the state Office of the Medical Investigator or from police reports from the agencies that investigated the deaths. The list has been sorted by the date of death.

### 1. Claude Gallegos

**Age:** 55  
**Location of death:** Española  
**Pronounced dead:** Jan. 14  
**Cause:** He died from an overdose of alcohol and the opiates fentanyl and oxycodone.

His wife had last seen him alive the evening prior to his death. The afternoon he was found dead, she tried to call him at 3:30 p.m., he did not answer the phone. She called him again an hour later and when she got home, she found all the lights off at the house.

When she went into his room, she found him lying on his back and he was cold to the touch. She called 911 at 5:30 p.m.

According to a review of the prescription drug monitoring program, he did not have a prescription for fentanyl. The pathologist did not note if he had a prescription for oxycodone.

Gallegos had a history of alcohol and prescription drug abuse, as well as high blood pressure.

Alcohol, fentanyl and oxycodone all suppress the central nervous system, including breathing.

### 2. David Quintana

**Age:** 44  
**Location of death:** Chimayó  
**Pronounced dead:** Jan. 23, 2016

**Cause:** He died from an overdose of heroin and alcohol.

On the afternoon of his death, he was picked up from a bar by his neighbor. He lost consciousness in the car and was immediately taken to the hospital.

Hospital personnel said Quintana arrived wearing a T-shirt, fuzzy pajamas and flip-flops, which a State Police officer noted did not seem like attire one would wear to a bar.

The neighbor told the officer, unsolicited, that he did not know anything about the track marks, or intravenous drug injection sites, on Quintana's arms.

Medical personnel found three needle marks on Quintana's body and noted that two of them were fresh and one looked older.

His girlfriend said he had been hanging out with his neighbor for about two weeks prior to his death. The neighbor, who was a heroin addict.

Quintana told her he was trying to clean up his neighbor's life.

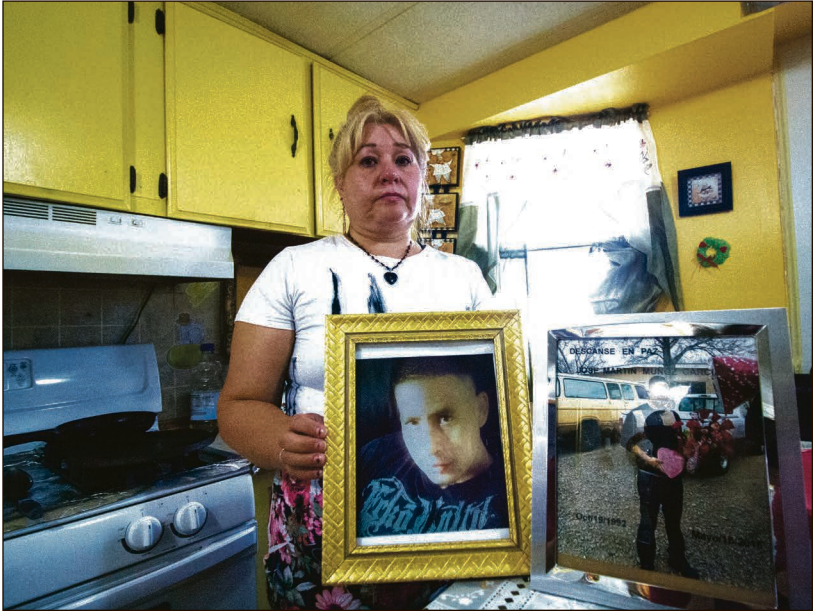
His liver showed signs of alcohol abuse and chronic high blood pressure. On the inside of his right elbow, the pathologist found a intravenous drug injection site.

His blood-alcohol level was 0.35, more than four times the legal limit for drunk driving.

### 3. Molly Martinez

**Age:** 51  
**Location of death:** La Mesilla  
**Pronounced dead:** Feb. 2

**Cause:** She died from an overdose of alcohol and the prescrip-



(SUNfoto by Wheeler Cowperthwaite)

**Adriana Muñoz shows off** pictures of her son, Jose Muñoz-Garcia. His death was just one of the 31 fatal drug overdoses in Rio Arriba County in 2016. She was the one who found him, dead in his room, on May 15, 2016.

tion opiate painkiller, oxycodone.

She was found slumped over in her bed, face-down and she had been reported to be drinking the previous night. Investigators found her left hand was clutching a cereal bowl to her chest. When deputies tried to check if she was breathing, they found that *rigor mortis* had already set in.

In her room, they found a small tub of prescription medication and family members told them that she had a prescription for oxycodone, although they were unable to find it.

Her 13-year-old daughter told deputies she went to wake her mother, but she was unresponsive and she ran to her uncle's house, next door, for help. Someone called 911 at 6:20 a.m.

Quintana had been drinking with a friend the night before her death and the uncle said that she mentioned she had been tired, but otherwise seemed OK. He left the house at 12:30 a.m., after drinking with her and that was the last time he saw her alive.

She had a history of prescription medication abuse and her liver showed signs of chronic alcohol abuse.

Alcohol and oxycodone both depress the central nervous system. Her blood-alcohol level was 0.22.

### 4. Elvira Enriquez

**Age:** 24  
**Location of death:** Tierra Amarilla  
**Pronounced dead:** Feb. 29

**Cause:** She died from an overdose of cocaine, heroin, buprenorphine (Suboxone) and alcohol.

A friend found Enriquez slumped over on her bed, not breathing, with blue lips. The friend immediately called 911 and tried to perform CPR on Enriquez. She had last seen her alive an hour earlier, and Enriquez seemed intoxicated and "out of it." She went to lie down and, when she was checked on an hour later, she was found to be choking, then not breathing.

At the scene, deputies found syringes, empty beer cans and one spoon on the kitchen sink.

Earlier in the day, she met her friend at Triple S Gas station and they each bought a bottle of alcohol. The friend said they drove back to Tierra Amarilla, where she went to her uncle's house because she needed to get her medication, including Suboxone, but she was unable to locate it.

At the autopsy, she was found to have fluid in her lungs and a slightly swollen brain, both indications of an overdose.

She had a history of heroin, alcohol and Suboxone abuse.

Her blood-alcohol level was 0.14.

### 5. Nicholas Fresquez

**Age:** 24  
**Location of death:** Chimayó  
**Pronounced dead:** March 31

**Cause:** He died from an overdose of heroin and alprazolam, also known as Xanax.

He and his father injected heroin, then went to sleep. His father later woke up to find his son unresponsive and he was pronounced dead at the scene. The investigating deputy found that he was cold to the touch.

He also found a large number of used hypodermic needles lying around the bedroom in which Fresquez was found deceased. He

was lying next to the bed.

The father seemed to be under the influence of something and said that he made coffee, after taking a dose of heroin with his son, and fell asleep, standing up, for 10 minutes. After that, both he and Fresquez laid down and when he woke up, Fresquez's eyes were rolled up, into the back of his head. He immediately pulled him off of the bed, gave him a dose of Narcan, the opiate overdose reversing drug, then started CPR. Because his son was still unresponsive, he called 911.

The medical investigator determined that Fresquez had been dead for several hours before he was found by his father.

They also found lighters and spoons at the house, indicative of drug use.

Although a test of his urine came back positive for cocaine, none was found in his blood. This indicated to the pathologist, that cocaine did not contribute to his death.

Both heroin and alprazolam depress the central nervous system.

### 6. Jenny Bourdon

**Age:** 30  
**Location of death:** Santa Clara  
**Pronounced dead:** April 6  
**Cause:** She died from an overdose of methadone.

Bourdon's death was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. She was last seen alive on the evening before her death and found dead the following morning in her bedroom. She had a full bottle of methadone in the evening before she was found, and in the morning, it was nearly empty.

She was last seen alive at 11 p.m., April 5, and she appeared to be high. The following morning, a family member woke up early to get one of the children in the house ready for school, but did not check on Bourdon until 10:30 a.m., and when she went in, she saw that she was not breathing and had a foam-like substance around her mouth.

A pathologist found Bourdon had track marks on the inside of her arms and told the Bureau investigator that the foam around her mouth was indicative of an overdose and, based on the condition of her body, she had been dead 10 hours before she was found.

She had a history of heroin, cocaine and Suboxone abuse.

The pathologist noted that she was not known to have a prescription for methadone in the weeks leading up to her death, although one family member claimed she did. The bottle found on her was prescribed in October 2015.

She did have a prescription for Suboxone, although none was found in her system.

Methadone is an opiate used for pain relief and for treatment of opioid addiction. It inhibits the part of the brain that controls breathing and when taken in excess, it can stop or slow breathing to the point where it causes organ and tissue damage.

Long-term methadone users develop a tolerance but, that goes away if the drug has not been used for some time.

### 7. Rhea Naranjo

**Age:** 40  
**Location of death:** Santa Clara  
**Pronounced dead:** April 21  
**Cause:** She died of an overdose of heroin and alcohol.

Naranjo's death was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

She was found by the Santa Clara Tribal Police, after they received an anonymous tip that she was unresponsive at her home. She called her parents around 20 to 30 minutes before police received the tip and was cooking dinner, April 20.

First responders found she was lying on the kitchen floor. Above her, on the electric stove top, a pan of beans was frying.

They initially found she was not breathing and had no pulse. However, they were able to revive her enough to get a pulse and transported her to the Española Hospital. She was then transported to the University of New Mexico Hospital for more intensive life-saving measures, but they were unsuccessful.

She was pronounced dead on April 21, 17 to 18 hours after she was initially found.

Inside the house, investigators found multiple packages of Narcan, the drug that reverses overdoses, and epinephrine, used to treat allergic reactions and asthma.

She had a history of alcohol abuse, marijuana use, asthma and hypertension. She had been hospitalized previously for an overdose of alcohol, opiates and benzodiazepines.

An autopsy found fluid in the lungs, common in overdose victims, an enlarged liver and chronic inflammation of the lungs.

Her blood-alcohol level was 0.127 and morphine, codeine and THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, were found in her blood.

### 8. Wilfred Salazar

**Age:** 63  
**Location of death:** Española  
**Pronounced dead:** April 25  
**Cause:** He died from an overdose of cocaine and methadone.

Salazar was found in his bed by his mother, who had seen him a half hour before, snoring in bed.

He had complained about shortness of breath, nausea and "not feeling well," after visiting a methadone clinic earlier in the day.

He had a history of chronic heroin and cocaine abuse, long-standing tobacco use, hypertension and a chronic wound on his left foot.

Methadone is used to treat the effects of opioid withdrawal, but when taken in significant doses, it can lead to unconsciousness, coma and death.

Cocaine can cause coronary artery spasm, arrhythmias, hypertension and damage to heart tissue. Since Salazar had pre-existing heart and lung disease, the drugs taken together significantly increased the risk of death from overdose.

### 9. Sharon Lorraine Krumae

**Age:** 59  
**Location of death:** Chama  
**Pronounced dead:** May 5

**Cause:** She died of an overdose of alcohol, zolpidem, bupropion and alprazolam, also known as Xanax.

Krumae was last seen the evening before her death and it was noted that she became increasingly intoxicated and belligerent over the course of the afternoon and evening.

She yelled so much that her husband went to their son's house for the night.

She was found on her bedroom floor the following morning, at 8:45 a.m., by her husband, who thought he could feel a pulse.

Officers tried to pull her to the middle of the floor to perform CPR, but noticed her legs were stiff and *rigor mortis* had already set in.

Her husband said she had overdosed before on prescription medication and he had resuscitated her once before.

She had a history of depression and prescription medication misuse.

Alcohol, zolpidem, bupropion and alprazolam all have similar effects in the body including drowsiness, unconsciousness, loss of coordination, shallow breathing and abnormal heart rhythms.

### 10. Jose Muñoz-Garcia

**Age:** 23  
**Location of death:** Alcalde  
**Pronounced dead:** May 15  
**Cause:** He died of an overdose of codeine, heroin and alprazolam, also known as Xanax.

Muñoz-Garcia was last known

to be alive when he texted his mother in the evening, on May 14. She went to check on him the following morning and found him on the floor next to his bed, after a neighbor unlocked the door for her.

He was found kneeling on the ground in his trailer, his head leaning against a plastic container. When deputies arrived, they found him cold to the touch.

On the ground next to him, officers found two needles, one of which appeared to have heroin in it.

He had a history of heroin abuse.

Alprazolam, codeine and heroin are depressants and they all inhibit the parts of the brain that control breathing.

Codeine is often an impurity in heroin and, in many autopsy reports, it is not listed as contributing to death because it is so often found in heroin.

When taken in combination, they can cause breathing to stop entirely or slow to a point that organs and tissue are damaged.

### 11. Manuel Patricio Montoya

**Age:** 32  
**Location of death:** Española  
**Pronounced dead:** June 15  
**Cause:** He died of an overdose of cocaine, heroin and buprenorphine.

The autopsy report lists the Española Police Department as having investigated his death, but the last contact the Department had with Montoya was in 2009.

The autopsy report also does not have a summary and opinion, which explains the circumstances of death and how a pathologist came to the conclusion that Montoya died from an overdose.

### 12. Robert Martinez

**Age:** 34  
**Location of death:** El Guique  
**Pronounced dead:** June 17  
**Cause:** He died of an overdose of alcohol and heroin.

Martinez was found unconscious, lying on the road near County Road 57 and Sports Road, around 4:39 p.m.

Deputy Sammy Marquez began CPR and Rio Arriba County Sheriff James Lujan administered two doses of Narcan, which reverses opiate overdoses. When medics arrived, they took over CPR from Marquez.

Over the past few days, Martinez had been repeatedly reported as being drunk and passing out in various locations in Española.

His girlfriend said she had not seen him in some time because his alcoholism and drug use had increased and she did not want that behavior in her home. He passed out down the hill from her house.

Martinez was taken to the Española Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 5:31 p.m.

He had scarring on his arm from chronic drug use and liver damage associated with chronic drug or alcohol abuse.

He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.32 and the pathologist also found a low level of chlordiazepoxide, an anti-anxiety drug also called Librium, in his blood. It is sometimes used for alcohol withdrawal.

Alcohol, heroin and chlordiazepoxide all depress the central nervous system, including heartbeat and breathing.

### 13. David Campos

**Age:** 24  
**Location of death:** Alcalde  
**Pronounced dead:** July 1  
**Cause:** He died of an overdose of heroin and methamphetamine.

The night he died, Campos went to his neighbor's house, at 9 p.m., upset that his wife was leaving him. He returned around 10:30 p.m. At 1:08 a.m., the neighbor with whom he was staying, woke to find him on the ground.

She gave him Narcan and when he did not wake up, she called 911. It appeared he had been sitting in a recliner, before he collapsed.

Emergency medical technicians found him dead when they arrived. He had a history of seizures and heroin abuse.

An autopsy found heavy, fluid-filled lungs with stomach contents in the upper airway — a result of breathing in vomited stomach contents in the period surrounding death, which is common in overdoses.

Methamphetamine can cause

high blood pressure, increased heart rate, irregular heart beats, coronary spasm, increased body temperature and seizures.

Heroin causes decreased breathing, which can cause fluid build-up in the lungs, swelling of brain tissue and ultimately lead to coma or death.

The pathologist concluded that the combined effects of the drugs caused his death.

### 14. Israel Ballinger

**Age:** 39  
**Location of death:** Española  
**Pronounced dead:** July 9  
**Cause:** He died of an overdose of alcohol and heroin.

Officers were called, after an employee at a store on Riverside Drive saw him, with another man, behind the dumpster. The unidentified man started slapping him, before running away.

When an officer responded, he found Ballinger slumped over, in a fetal position, near a dumpster behind the business. There were syringes and a half-empty beer can nearby.

One police officer noted that Ballinger only recently started using heroin and the medical investigator found injection sites on his lower, right leg.

Emergency medical services were contacted but attempts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead at the scene.

At the autopsy, the pathologist found chronic injection sites on both arms.

The autopsy found he had an enlarged heart and excessive fluid in his lungs, both signs of a drug overdose, as well as damage to his liver, an indication of chronic alcohol abuse.

He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.21.

Heroin and alcohol are central-nervous system depressants and can cause decreased breathing, coma and death.

### 15. Eugene Alire

**Age:** 34  
**Location of death:** El Rito  
**Pronounced dead:** July 11  
**Cause:** He died of an overdose of heroin.

Alire was found, by his mother, lying on the couch in his house, with vomit on his chest, around 8:45 p.m. She had last seen him around 3 p.m., when she brought him dinner.

When she went to check on him, he would not answer the door, but when she looked through one of the windows, she saw him on the couch. She found him slouched over on his left side.

He had a history of high blood pressure, hypothyroidism, diabetes, injuries from a motor vehicle accident and heroin abuse.

An autopsy found he had heavy, fluid-filled lungs, mild swelling of the brain, an enlarged heart, scarring of the kidneys and an enlarged liver.

The pathologist concluded that his elevated body mass index caused significant weight on his chest and contributed to heroin's ability to stop his breathing.

### 16. Danielle Romero

**Age:** 29  
**Location of death:** Chimayó  
**Pronounced dead:** July 23  
**Cause:** She died of an overdose of cocaine, heroin, alcohol, propanolol, diazepam, bupropion, topiramate and hydroxyzine.

Romero was dropped off at a friend's house in the afternoon and had slurred speech and confrontational behavior.

She went for a walk and returned acting more intoxicated. She mumbled something to her friend, before laying down on the bed and was found dead by the friend, four hours later.

She had a history of daily alcohol use and heroin, cocaine and prescription medication abuse.

An autopsy also found bruising on the left side of her buttocks, shins and thigh, and cutting wounds on her left forearm.

Propanolol can treat high blood pressure, chest pain and an uneven heartbeat.

Clonazepam and diazepam are benzodiazepines, a type of depressant often prescribed for pain and to treat anxiety.

Bupropion, also known as Wellbutrin, is an anti-depressant and smoking deterrent taken orally.

# 2016 OVERDOSE DEATHS AND CAUSES

Hydroxyzine, also known as Vistari, is an antihistamine with central nervous system depressant effects that is used to treat anxiety, acute alcohol withdrawal and motion sickness. It has also been found mixed in with batches of cocaine.

Topiramate, also known as Topamax, is depressant used to prevent seizures and migraines.

She also had a blood-alcohol level of 0.01.

## 17. Manuel Carlos Gallegos

**Age:** 41

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** July 23

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of heroin and Suboxone.

Gallegos was found, by his mother, in the morning, dead on his bedroom floor. She told officers she shared a cigarette with her son at 1 a.m., outside the house.

When she got up the next morning, she did not go to wake him until 7 a.m. She found his bedroom door was unlocked and after opening it, she found him lying on the bed and he was cold to the touch.

His son alleged that a family friend had given his father something from an orange pill bottle, asking his father if he wanted to get high.

He had a history of prescription and illicit drug abuse, high blood pressure, a hepatitis C infection and alcohol abuse.

## 18. Christina Garcia

**Age:** 52

**Location of death:** Unlisted

**Pronounced dead:** July 27

**Cause:** She died of pneumonia and sepsis caused by an overdose of cocaine.

A toxicology screen also found Suboxone, known generically as buprenorphine, an opiate used to treat opiate addiction. However, it was not listed as contributing to her death.

She was at home, and having difficulty breathing, when her father found her. Emergency medical services transported her to the emergency room.

Narcan was administered and unsuccessful resuscitation attempts were made. Narcan cannot reverse the effects of pneumonia, just of depressed breathing caused by opiates.

She had a history of suboxone, cocaine and heroin use.

An autopsy found she had an enlarged heart, congested liver and pneumonia, which the pathologist noted likely developed after debilitating episodes of drug use.

Pneumonia is a lung infection that causes difficulty breathing. The infection, called sepsis, spread to her blood. Sepsis, in turn, leads to a decrease in the blood supply to the organs.

Cocaine can cause increased heart rate, high blood pressure and increased body temperature. The pathologist wrote that the combination of these conditions led to her death.

The autopsy report does not list which agency investigated her death. State Police, the Rio Arriba County Sheriff's Office and the Española Police Department officials all stated they did not investigate it.

## 19. Brandi Ortiz Merrifield

**Age:** 22

**Location of death:** Velarde

**Pronounced dead:** Aug. 7

**Cause:** She died of an overdose of heroine, cocaine and Suboxone.

She was last seen, by her friend, using heroin around 2 a.m. The friend asked her not to use it because she had been clean for a long time, but Ortiz Merrifield said she was going to stop using the following day.

Her friend left her and came back, with food, at 4 a.m. She found Ortiz Merrifield on the bed, lying on her stomach. She was unconscious and not breathing. She tried putting ice on her feet, before running to wake someone else in the house and call 911.

When State Police officers arrived, they started CPR on her until medics arrived 20 minutes later. They found she had a faint pulse and transported her to the Española Hospital.

She was pronounced dead more than three hours after she was found unconscious on the bed.

She had a history of abusing heroin, alcohol and other substances.

The pathologist found lethal levels of cocaine, morphine and Suboxone in her blood. Morphine is the break-down product of heroin.

## 20. Adam Lujan

**Age:** 32

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** Aug. 7

**Cause:** He died from an overdose of heroin and cocaine.

He was at the Ohkay Casino the night of his death and was invited to stay at a friend's house in Española.

At 3 a.m., the morning of his death, his friend's mother yelled that they better not be smoking in the house.

At 8:30 a.m., the friend found Lujan unresponsive on a futon and started CPR. He then pulled Lujan off the futon and into the hallway, where he continued to give him CPR. CPR is more effective when the patient's body is on a hard surface.

He had a history of alcohol and cocaine abuse and an autopsy found an enlarged heart and early fibrosis of the liver.

Metabolites of cocaine and heroin were found in his blood.

## 21. Edward Martinez

**Age:** 44

**Location of death:** Medanales

**Pronounced dead:** Aug. 22

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and oxycodone.

A neighbor said two guys dropped Martinez off at his house at 5:30 a.m., Saturday morning. The neighbor did not check on him at all, Sunday. When he checked on him at 10:54 a.m., Monday, he was not conscious and not breathing.

During a search of the house, a Rio Arriba County Sheriff's deputy found a hypodermic needle and a metal bottle cap with a small brown cotton ball in it. The bottle cap is used as a vessel to cook heroin and the cotton ball is used to filter it.

Martinez had a history of illicit drug use and had been released from a rehab in Peña Blanca weeks before his death. The neighbor described Martinez as being depressed and using drugs.

Oxycodone and heroin can cause decreased consciousness and breathing which can lead to a stop in breathing.

Methamphetamine and cocaine can cause increased heart rate, increased blood pressure and irregular heart rhythms.

He also had blood-alcohol level of 0.04.

## 22. Patrick Baldonado

**Age:** 27

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** Sept. 18

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of heroin and oxycodone.

Baldonado's girlfriend found him unconscious, on the bathroom floor. He appeared to have been dead for several hours, before he was found.

His girlfriend called him repeatedly the day of his death, but he did not answer his phone. She got worried and came to check on him because, the previous day, he rolled his vehicle and had been complaining of back and neck pain. She last spoke to him the previous night.

She called 911 at 5:57 p.m., after finding him unconscious and not breathing.

His father told officers that his son had received a text message a while back from an unknown person, saying that if he didn't pay them the money he owed them, they would kill him.

Officers found a used syringe next to Baldonado's right arm and learned he had a history of heroin use.

Heroin and oxycodone, both opiates, depress the central nervous system.

Diazepam, a depressant, was also found in his blood, but was not listed as having contributed to his death.

## 23. Steve Martinez

**Age:** 57

**Location of death:** Chamita

**Pronounced dead:** Aug. 18

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of cocaine, heroin and alcohol.

Martinez was found by two neighbors outside his trailer unconscious and not breathing. They

had come by to see if he wanted to get food with them.

A deputy tried to shake him awake, but found *rigor mortis* had already set in.

The deputy found an empty whiskey bottle, an empty pint-sized vodka bottle and three needles in the trailer.

He had a history of heroin abuse and an autopsy found numerous puncture marks on his arms and hands.

The pathologist also found fluid in the lungs and narrowing and hardening of the arteries of the heart, which are indicative of an overdose death.

He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.22.

## 24. Julius Gonzales

**Age:** 47

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** Oct. 2

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of alcohol and heroin.

Gonzales was found by medics in the abandoned Arrow Motel.

He was taken to the hospital, but attempts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful.

He had a history of illicit substance abuse and an autopsy found he had an enlarged heart, inflamed liver and narrow blood vessels in the brain and aorta.

The autopsy also found fluid filled lungs, a swollen brain and a distended urinary bladder.

He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.24. Alcohol and heroin both depress the central nervous system.

## 25. Raymond Manzanares

**Age:** 57

**Location of death:** Hernandez

**Pronounced dead:** Oct. 15

**Cause:** Raymond Manzanares died of an overdose of Suboxone, cocaine, diazepam and heroin.

Manzanares's son found him unconscious, in his bedroom, after laying down to take a nap.

Manzanares's brother performed CPR at 12:15 a.m., and paramedics administered an unidentified medicine and used an defibrillator, but their efforts could not revive him.

Deputies found burned foil, indicative of heroin use.

He had a history of sleep apnea, high blood pressure, had undergone a recent surgery to remove his gallbladder and was known to abuse prescription medication.

The combination of drugs that decrease breathing and cocaine, which increases the heart's demand for oxygen, led to his death.

## 26. Jay Sanchez

**Age:** 60

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** Nov. 1

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of alcohol, heroin and Suboxone.

Sanchez was staying a friend's house and appeared to have been drinking heavily for much of the evening. The woman with whom he was staying, got home at 8:30 p.m., and shortly thereafter, Sanchez took a shower. The woman went to check on him, after he had been in the shower for an hour-and-a-half.

In the bathroom, she saw Sanchez on all fours, still dressed, surrounded by vomit, with his head leaning against the bathroom vanity. He also had syringes around him and a spoon, used to cook heroin.

She grabbed his bag because he had a dose of Narcan, the opiate overdose reversing drug, in it. Although she gave him two doses, he did not respond and she started giving him CPR. After he failed to respond for five minutes, she called 911 and medics took over.

Paramedics arrived at around 10 p.m., and declared him dead at 10:47 p.m.

Sanchez had a history of heroin and alcohol abuse.

He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.23.

## 27. Zachary Pacheco

**Age:** 25

**Location of death:** Hernandez

**Pronounced dead:** Nov. 13

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of methadone and alcohol.

He was last seen alive, around 6 a.m., by a friend, when he got up to get a glass of water. The friend checked on him again at 10:50 a.m., to see if he wanted anything to eat, and found that Pacheco had blue lips and discolored skin. He knew something was wrong be-

cause Pacheco snored loudly but the room was quiet.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a "telltale sign" of a person who is close to death from an opioid overdose is the "death rattle," exhaled breath with a "very distinct, labored sound coming from the throat."

Pacheco had a history of illicit drug use, heavy alcohol use and hypertension.

He had kidney damage and fluid in his lungs.

He was a chronic methadone user with a level well into the fatal range and had a blood-alcohol level of 0.33, more than four times the legal limit for drunk driving.

Methadone and alcohol are central nervous system depressants and the pathologist found the combination resulted in his death.

## 28. Jessica Martinez

**Age:** 41

**Location of death:** Velarde

**Pronounced dead:** Nov. 20

**Cause:** She died of an overdose of heroin, cocaine, methadone, alcohol, clonazepam, diazepam and venlafaxine.

Martinez was found in bed, around 11 p.m., by her friend, with whom she'd been staying for six days. When found, Martinez had no pulse.

The friend performed CPR and used Narcan, but he was unable to revive her.

Officers found a hypodermic needle, metal spoon and a small, brown cotton ball in the bedroom.

The friend said Martinez had just gotten out of a violent relationship and suffered from depression.

She had a history of heroin and alcohol use.

An autopsy found injection marks, an inflamed liver and her brain and lungs were filled with fluid.

She had a blood-alcohol level of 0.051, "therapeutic" levels of clonazepam, nordazepam, methadone and a "sub-therapeutic" level of venlafaxine.

Heroin, clonazepam, diazepam, methadone, venlafaxine and alcohol are all depressants that affect the central nervous system. Cocaine is a stimulant that increases heart and blood pressure.

The pathologist found that the combination of drugs that decrease breathing and a drug that increases the heart's demand for oxygen led to her death.

## 29. Lonnie Duran

**Age:** 56

**Location of death:** Dixon

**Pronounced dead:** Dec. 4

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of alcohol, chlordiazepoxide and lorazepam.

Duran was found unresponsive on his bedroom floor, by a friend who came to check on him. He was cold to the touch.

Officers found several bottles of Heineken beer in the room, along with two bottles of vodka. One was empty and the other was still half-full.

He had a history of alcohol abuse and a brain injury from an attack in 2014. Dried blood was found on his mouth.

He had an enlarged heart, narrow blood vessels leading to the heart and cirrhosis of the liver. The on-scene medical investigator declared that his death was likely natural.

He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.31 and chlordiazepoxide, a drug used to control symptoms of alcohol withdrawal, known by the brand name Librium, and lorazepam, an anti-anxiety drug also known as Ativan, in his blood.

Alcohol, chlordiazepoxide and lorazepam all affect the parts of the brain that control breathing and may cause breathing to stop entirely. The effects on breathing are heightened in a person not accustomed to taking those specific prescription drugs and he didn't have a prescription for lorazepam and hadn't been prescribed chlordiazepoxide since March 2016.

His alcoholism limited his ability to break down the drugs and increased his risk of heart failure. The pathologist found this combination of conditions led to his death.

## 30. Deanna Martinez

**Age:** 42

**Location of death:** Chimayó

**Pronounced dead:** Dec. 25

**Cause:** She died of an overdose of cocaine, heroin, codeine, dextro/levomethorphan, diphenhydramine and hydromorphone.

Codeine and dextro/levomethorphan are commonly found as impurities in heroin. Diphenhydramine treats allergic reactions and is known by the brand name Benadryl. Hydromorphone, like codeine and heroin, is an opiate. It is sold under the brand name Dilaudid.

Her cousin said Martinez came to her house around 3:40 a.m., fell in the bathroom twice, and complained of difficulty breathing.

Her cousin found her not breathing in her bed at 8:20 a.m., and called 911 before performing CPR. She performed CPR until a friend arrived and switched off, but Martinez could not be revived.

Police found multiple needles and syringes in the room.

She had a history of heroin abuse and had recently begun injecting heroin into her neck.

She had numerous scars consistent with needle injection marks and bruising in the neck, as well as a blood clot in a vein on the right side of her neck. Her brain was swollen as well, from lack of oxygen.

Martinez took drugs that decreased breathing and a drug that increased the heart's demand for oxygen and that combination led to her death.

## 31. Troy Vasquez

**Age:** 45

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** Dec. 31

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of heroin and alcohol.

Vasquez's friend told police officers that he was moving a mattress into his room, in an abandoned house they were squatting in, and he heard a loud noise, like something hitting the ground. He went in and saw Vasquez lying on the floor. He gave him four doses of Narcan and, when he didn't wake up, told the neighbors to call 911, while he performed CPR on him.

When medics arrived, they told officers that Vasquez was already dead.

Officers found a rubber tourniquet, syringe and a lighter at the scene.

They found one fresh injection wound on his arm, along with the empty syringe.

He had a history of methamphetamine abuse and a track mark scar on his right arm.

He had a blood-alcohol level of 0.13.

Heroin and alcohol are central nervous depressants that can reduce or stop breathing. The combination led to his death.

## Suicides

### 1. Deatta Donner-Hornback

**Age:** 61

**Location of death:** Unlisted

**Pronounced dead:** April 20

**Cause:** She died of an overdose of sertraline, quetiapine and mirtazapine. Hypothermia was a contributing factor to her death.

Donner-Hornback was found in the snow, 30-feet from her car, which was parked in a private driveway more than 100 miles away from her Santa Fe home.

She had a history of depression, bipolar disease and had made previous suicide attempts by drug overdose.

Her blood had beyond therapeutic levels of quetiapine, sertraline and mirtazapine, all drugs prescribed to her for treatment. The combined effects of these drugs can cause confusion, disorientation and fatal, abnormal heartbeats.

An autopsy found her skin was a cherry-pink color, meaning hypothermia was a contributing factor to her death.

### 2. Ryan Bustos

**Age:** 35

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** May 28

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of fentanyl, oxycodone and alcohol.

Bustos was last seen by his girlfriend, the night before his death. They had been arguing about his drinking problem earlier in the evening, and when she returned from his mother's house, he said

he had taken 45 pills and was going to take more if she didn't give him his fentanyl patches.

When she gave him the fentanyl patches, he said "You will never see me again" and left. She said Bustos threatened suicide before.

He was found the following morning near a wood pile at his house.

Officers found a fentanyl package on the floor in his house, an empty vodka bottle of the floor of his car and three miniature bottles — two empty, one full — of green apple schnapps on the passenger seat.

An autopsy found swelling and fluid in Bustos's brain and lungs.

He had a toxic concentration of fentanyl, a non-toxic concentration of oxycodone and a blood-alcohol level of 0.16.

The combination of fentanyl, oxycodone and alcohol can cause breathing to slow or stop entirely.

### 3. Christopher Martinez

**Age:** 48

**Location of death:** Española

**Pronounced dead:** Nov. 30

**Cause:** He died of an overdose of hydrocodone and quetiapine.

Martinez was last seen three days prior to his death, when his wife filed for divorce because of his drinking. He threatened suicide then and had threatened suicide before, during previous arguments.

His wife found him on the floor of his bedroom and called 911, then performed CPR. When emergency medical services arrived, they pronounced him dead.

Officers found a 24-ounce Foster's beer can on top of the nightstand, a loaded .357 caliber pistol and several empty bottles of prescription medication in the bathroom trash can.

He had a history of depression, anxiety, arthritis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and alcohol abuse.

An autopsy found he had an enlarged heart and severe liver damage, likely from alcohol abuse, as well as fluid in his lungs.

A blood test didn't find any alcohol in his system.