

# Official: Student died of alcohol poisoning

By Charles W. Kim  
Managing Editor

Alcohol poisoning killed 19-year-old Rutgers student Caitlyn Kovacs, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office said Monday.

Ms. Kovacs, of Monmouth Junction, became distressed while attending "a small gathering" Saturday, Sept. 20 at the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity house at 78 College Avenue in New Brunswick.

Police said she was taken to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital by friends at around 3 a.m. Sept. 21 and doctors pronounced her dead at 3:19 a.m.

In a press release Monday afternoon, spokesman Jim O'Neill said the death was caused by "acute etha-

nol toxicity" and that the manner of death was accidental.

Acute ethanol toxicity is another term for alcohol poisoning, according to the Mayo Clinic's website.

The site defines it as "a serious — and sometimes deadly — consequence of drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time."

Drinking in this manner, according to the site, can affect breathing, heart rate, body temperature and gag reflexes, which could lead to a coma or death.

Officials made the determination after toxicology results came in from the Sept. 21 autopsy.

According to the Mayo Clinic's site, males consuming five or more

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Facebook phot

Officials said the death of 19-year-old Caitlyn Kovacs was accidental and due to alcohol poisoning.

## Kovacs

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drinks within two hours or a female drinking four beverages within that time can lead to a fatal dose, even though the person has not yet passed out.

"Even when you're unconscious or you've stopped drinking, alcohol continues to be released from your stom-

ach and intestines into your bloodstream, and the level of alcohol in your body continues to rise," according to the site.

Risk factors for this kind of poisoning include size, weight, overall health, when you've eaten, the percentage of alcohol in the drinks, if any drugs are combined with the alcohol, the amount consumed

and the individual's tolerance, according to the site.

Ms. Kovacs was a 2013 SBHS graduate and was in her sophomore year studying animal sciences at the university.

"It is a tremendous loss for our community and school," South Brunswick High School Principal Peter Varela said at the time of her death. "She

was very involved in our school."

Classmate Maria Riegel, who served with Ms. Kovacs in the SBHS student government for four years, said the news was "surreal."

"She always had a positive attitude and brought so much laughter to our Class Council group," said Ms. Riegel, who is attending college in Chicago. "She was one to light up a room and make our experiences fun. I will never forget the great times we all had with her. She will definitely be missed amongst our 2013 SBHS class community."

The investigation is active and is continuing, according to the release.

Anyone with information is asked to call Lt. Paul Fischer of the Rutgers University Police Department at (848) 932-8025, Detective Ken Abode of the New Brunswick Police Department at (732) 745-5217, or Detective Jeffrey Temple of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office at (732) 745-3373.

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