

Barry's Death Highlights Drug Abuse Struggles for User, Family



NBC4 Washington
Marion Christopher Barry

What to Know

- **Christopher Barry struggled for more than a decade with addictions.**
- **A police report said the son of former Mayor Marion Barry "went outside and had smoked K2 (synthetic marijuana) and PCP drugs."**
- **Funeral plans for Christopher Barry are incomplete while a maternal grandmother travels to Washington.**

The death of Marion Christopher Barry, the son of the late D.C. mayor, is calling renewed attention to the problem of drug abuse.

Barry struggled for more than a decade with addictions. Experts said struggles like his have a profound effect on families and friends, too.

Early Sunday, police and an ambulance were called to a southeast apartment complex where Barry had collapsed. A police report said the son of former Mayor Marion Barry "went outside and had smoked K2 (synthetic marijuana) and PCP drugs" before "acting crazy, different" and then suddenly "dropped."

He was pronounced dead at George Washington Hospital, the latest victim in a national drug problem.

Dr. Anita Gadhia-Smith, a psychotherapist in Washington and Maryland, noted Christopher Barry had struggled for many years with addictions but failed one final time.

“We have, in this country, 78 deaths a day just from opiate overdoses, not to mention all the other substances out there,” Gadhia-Smith said. “Although many people seek help, not everyone makes it into recovery.”

Gadhia-Smith, herself in recovery two decades, said addictions also can wear down or destroy people and their family and friends who try to help.

“That feeling is very common among friends and family, second-guessing what they did and didn’t do,” Gadhia-Smith said. “It’s a tricky thing, because sometimes, walking away is exactly the right thing to do, so that the person can hit bottom. Other times, you walk away, and they die.”

Funeral plans for Christopher Barry are incomplete while a maternal grandmother travels to Washington.

Published at 9:31 AM EDT on Aug 16, 2016