


# The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Missouri




**Police seized enough fentanyl to kill 725,000 people—more than twice the population of St. Louis.**

The country has seen an upsurge in **counterfeit prescription pills** masquerading as painkillers and Xanax. These pills are disguised as real medications but made with deadly fentanyl or its even deadlier variants, and even a fraction of a single pill can mean death in less than 30 minutes of ingesting it.

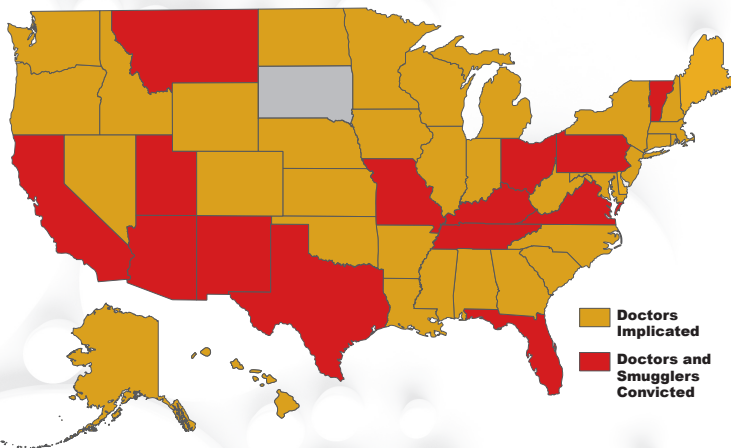
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Missourians. In November 2017, a man was caught on I-55 carrying almost **five pounds of fentanyl**—enough to kill 40 times the population of New Madrid County, where police stopped him. This dangerous raw ingredient is made into fake pills by drug traffickers like Joshua Kelly in Cape Girardeau who sold counterfeit prescription drugs he had made with a pill press.

## 39 Missouri Doctors Implicated in Fake Drug Rings

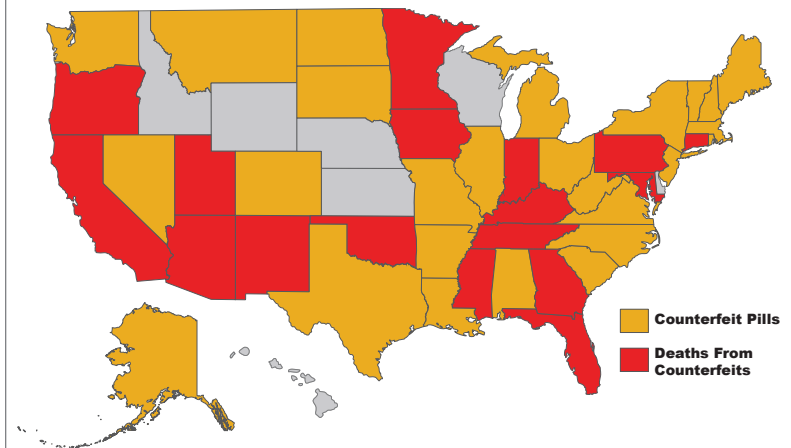
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Missouri as well. 39 different medical practices in Missouri have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or fake, and if they died from a lack of treatment. 

**Opening the U.S.'s closed drug supply chain puts Missourian lives at risk of serious injury or death.**

**Fake Cancer Drug Crisis**



**Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths**



# Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in Missouri (2010–2017)

**Based on reported investigations.**

**Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of Missouri residents.**

## Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Made with Fentanyl

**November 2017:** State troopers seized 4.8 pounds of raw fentanyl from a driver on I-55 in New Madrid County, enough to kill 725,000 adults.<sup>1</sup>

**August 2017:** Joshua Kelly of Cape Girardeau pleaded guilty to selling fentanyl and other drugs on the internet. Kelly manufactured and sold fake oxycodone, Norco, and Xanax pills.<sup>2</sup>

**November 2016:** A Utah-based drug counterfeiting operation shipped a buyer in Missouri 11 fentanyl-laced counterfeit oxycodone pills.<sup>3</sup>

## Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

**May 2015:** Dr. Mel E. Lucas of St. Louis pleaded guilty to charges related to buying black market oncology drugs.<sup>4</sup>

**April 2015:** The FDA warned three Missouri medical practices and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.<sup>5</sup>

**March 2015:** Dr. Robert L. Carter of Joplin pleaded guilty to purchasing non-FDA approved medications from CanadaDrugs.com.<sup>6</sup> In 2012 and 2013, the FDA warned nine Missouri doctors offices and more than 500 across the country to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.<sup>7</sup>

**May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, 12 in Missouri, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>8</sup>

**2012:** Turkish distributor Ozay Pharmaceuticals smuggled counterfeit, misbranded, and adulterated cancer drugs to Chesterfield. Ozay shipped temperature-sensitive cancer treatments with no temperature protection and sold cancer drugs with no active ingredient.<sup>9</sup>

**February 2012:** Dr. Abid Nisar of St. Louis pleaded guilty to charges related to buying black market oncology drugs.<sup>10</sup>

## Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

**March 2016:** The FDA warned nine Missouri doctors and more than 1,200 nationwide to stop buying from Canadian distributor TC Medical, which sold 22 different kinds of non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Botox.<sup>11</sup>

**December 2013:** Clinic Manager Thomas Greg Martin pleaded guilty to receiving misbranded Botox from a foreign, unlicensed drug wholesaler.<sup>12</sup>

**November 2013:** Dr. Erick Falconer of St. Louis pleaded guilty to charges related to buying black market Botox.<sup>13</sup> Falconer was one of six Missouri practitioners (233 across the country) warned for buying fraudulent Botox in July 2013.<sup>14</sup>

## Other Drugs

**January 2016:** St. Louis doctor, Michael “Ted” Mimlitz, pleaded guilty to charges related to distributing black market human growth hormone.<sup>15</sup>

**April 2012:** Benny Carmi and Moshe Dahan pleaded guilty to and were sentenced for smuggling more than 9,000 separate shipments of counterfeit, subpotent drugs into the U.S., including to customers in Missouri.<sup>16</sup>

**October 2010:** St. Louis resident Mark Hughes pleaded guilty to selling thousands of counterfeit erectile dysfunction pills.<sup>17</sup>

## Footnotes

1. "Troopers Seize 4.8 Pounds of Fentanyl During Missouri Traffic Stop," *Q13 Fox*, November 8, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2F7C7iQ>.
2. Tyler Graef, "Smoke-shop Owner in Cape Accused Making, Dealing Illegal Drugs," *Southeast Missourian*, May 11, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2ripiAo> and Plea Agreement, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida, Case No. 17-20433-CR-UU, <http://bit.ly/2FQCCyX>.
3. Superseding Indictment, U.S. District Court, District of Utah, Central Division, Case No. 2:16-cr-00631-DAK, <http://bit.ly/2mGXekE>.
4. "Local Physician and Clinic Sentenced on Health Care Related Charges," U.S. Department of Justice, September 2, 2015, <http://bit.ly/2DkeffM>.
5. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased Counterfeit or Unapproved Prescription Drugs," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last updated August 17, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
6. "July 15, 2015: Former Joplin Oncologist Sentenced for Dispensing Foreign, Misbranded Drugs," U.S. Department of Justice Press Release, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, <http://bit.ly/2FOBcoI>.
7. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased Counterfeit or Unapproved Prescription Drugs, 2012–2014," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last updated June 12, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
8. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased....," <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
9. "Turkish Man Sentenced for Smuggling Counterfeit Cancer Drugs," U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Missouri, October 28, 2014, <http://bit.ly/2mJostf>.
10. "February 16, 2012: Local Cancer Doctor Pleads Guilty to Receiving Misbranded Cancer Drugs Two Californians also Named in Indictment," U.S. Department of Justice Press Release, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, <http://bit.ly/2DIW5u2>.
11. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased....," <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
12. "Clinic Manager Sentenced For Receiving Misbranded Botox," U.S. Department of Justice, March 28, 2014, <http://bit.ly/2rm7pRo>.
13. "Local Doctor Pleads Guilty To Making False Statement To Agent," U.S. Department of Justice, November 6, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2DLxUlq>.
14. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased....," <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
15. Veneta Rizvic, "Doctor gets probation for giving patients Mexican HGH," *St. Louis Business Journal*, April 25, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2DKhM3X>.
16. "April 24, 2012: Two Israeli Men Sentenced for Smuggling Counterfeit and Misbranded Cialis into the United States," U.S. Department of Justice, <http://bit.ly/2mHKpXm>.
17. Robert Patrick, "Fake Impotence Drugs Mean Prison for St. Louis County Man," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 18, 2010, <http://bit.ly/2mHURoX>.