The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in North Dakota

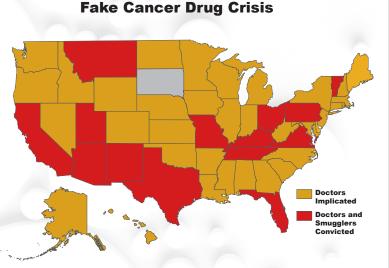
In April 2017, police broke up a drug ring based in Grand Forks which sold counterfeit fentanyl pills throughout North Dakota and part of Minnesota. The country has seen an upsurge in counterfeit prescription pills masquerading as painkillers and Xanax. Disguised as real medications but made with deadly 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.

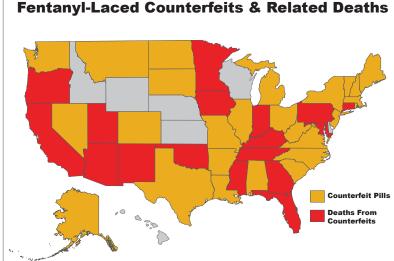
Fentanyl is a serious threat to North Dakotans. In October 2017, the U.S. Department of Justice announced charges in Fargo against Chinese national Jian Zhang and eight other individuals. Zhang is alleged to have run a company that sold fentanyl via the dark web that caused several overdose deaths in the state.

10 North Dakota Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched North Dakota as well. Io different medical practices in North Dakota 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 North Dakotan lives at risk of serious injury or death.







Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in North Dakota (2012–2018)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of North Dakota residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Made with Fentanyl

January 2018: A Grand Forks man received 65 months in jail for his role in a conspiracy that sold counterfeit oxycodone made

with fentanyl in North Dakota and northwest Minnesota.1

October 2017: Three members of a Grand Forks fentanyl pill ring pleaded guilty in federal court.

October 2017: Chinese national Jian Zhang and eight other individuals were indicted in Fargo for their alleged roles in a

fentanyl distribution ring. Zhang faced multiple charges including Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute and Distribute Controlled Substances and Controlled Substance Analogues Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury

and Death.3

August 2017: Police in Grand Forks issued a warning to member of the public after four people overdosed on fentanyl in just a

matter of a few days.4

May 2017: The indictment of Aaron Shamo from Utah alleged that his fentanyl drug ring shipped 500 counterfeit pills into

North Dakota in November 2016.5

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

May 2013: The FDA warned 780 medical practices, two in North Dakota, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller

Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁶

2012 and 2013: The FDA warned two North Dakota doctors offices and more than 500 across the country to stop buying from

CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.⁷

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

March 2016: The FDA warned four doctors and clinics in North Dakota 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.8

July 2013: The FDA warned two North Dakota doctors and more than 230 nationwide to stop buying from Online Botox

Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox because may be counterfeit and/or may be drugs from foreign or

unknown sources that are not approved for distribution in the United States.9

- 2. Andrew Hazzard, "Three plead guilty in Grand Forks fentanyl ring," Grand Forks Herald, October 30, 2017, http://bit.ly/2n4wStY.
- 3. "Chinese National and Eight Others Indicted in North Dakota in 'Operation Denial,'" U.S. Department of Justice Press Release, October 17, 2017, http://bit.ly/2Dy9nQ9.
- 4. "Grand Forks Police warn of drugs laced with fentanyl after four overdoses," Valley News Live, August 30, 2017, http://bit.ly/2BnnvtF.
- 5. Superseding Indictment, U.S. District Court, District of Utah, Central Division, Case No. 2:16-cr-00631-DAK, http://bit.ly/2mGXekE.
- 6. "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.
- 7. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...," http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s.
- 8. "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.
- 9. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...," http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s.

I. April Baumgarten, "Grand Forks man gets 65 months for dealing fentanyl pills," Grand Forks Herald, January II, 2018, http://bit.ly/2DL4rs1.