

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Oklahoma

Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics found six new fentanyl analogues in autopsies performed in just a six month period in 2017.

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.**

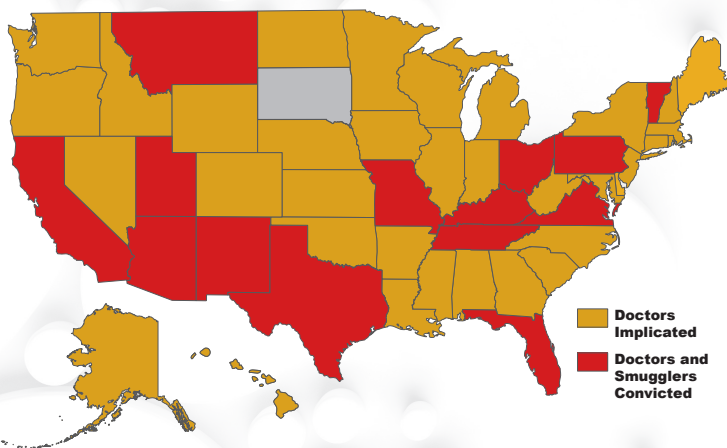
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Oklahomans. In March 2016, Oklahoma City resident Jim Hadley woke up to find his wife, sister-in-law and stepson dead. All three had taken prescription pills the evening before, but the pills were counterfeit, laced with fentanyl.

36 Oklahoma Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

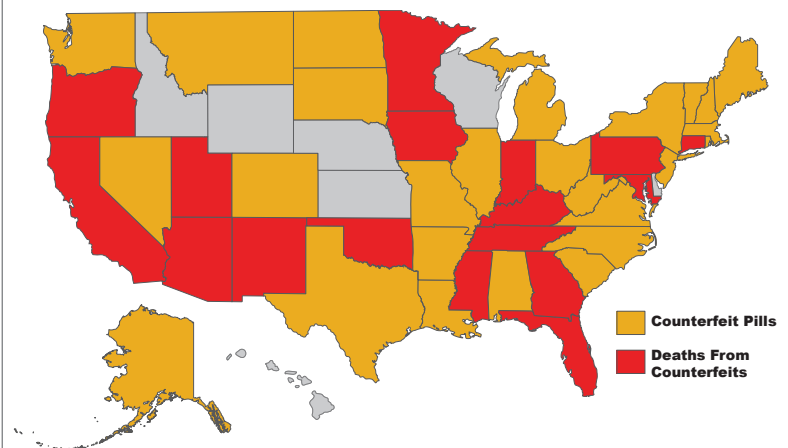
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Oklahoma as well. 36 different medical practices in Oklahoma have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones 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 Oklahoma lives at risk of serious injury or death.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in Oklahoma (2012–2017)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of Oklahoma residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Made with Fentanyl

- November 2017:** The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics announced the discovery of six new fentanyl analogues in autopsy reports between May and November. They also arrested a man in southern Oklahoma who was making counterfeit pills with fentanyl.¹
- May 2017:** The indictment of Aaron Shamo from Utah shows his fentanyl drug ring shipped counterfeit pills into Oklahoma.²
- June 2016:** Law enforcement and first responders were warned to lookout for pills made to look like Lortab and oxycodone, but that actually contained fentanyl.³
- May 2016:** Authorities warned the public about the dangers of fentanyl. The drug had already claimed dozens of lives in the state.⁴
- March 2016:** Oklahoma City resident Jim Hadley woke up one morning to find his wife, sister-in-law, and stepson dead. Toxicology reports revealed that all three had taken prescription painkillers that contained fentanyl.⁵

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, six in Oklahoma, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁶
- February–June 2012:** The FDA warned 139 medical practices, six in Oklahoma, to stop doing business with Richards Pharma, Clinical Care, Quality Specialty Products (QSP), Montana Healthcare Solutions, or Bridgewater Medical. All of these companies were known to be selling counterfeit cancer medications.⁷

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned 19 doctors and clinics in Oklahoma 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

Other Drugs

- March 2013:** Michael Schlueter and Thomas Variola, owners of Oklahoma Male Clinic, were sentenced in federal court and had their practice closed. The clinic used misbranded drugs to treat their customers with weight problems and sexual dysfunction.⁹

Footnotes

1. Crystal Price, "OBN discovers six new types of fentanyl in Oklahoma using autopsy reports," *KOCO News 5*, November 7, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2rNQqax>.
2. Superseding Indictment, U.S. District Court, District of Utah, Central Division, Case No. 2:16-cr-00631-DAK, <http://bit.ly/2mGXekE>.
3. Grant Hermes, "Oklahoma Authorities On Lookout For Fake, Lethal Painkillers," *News 9*, June 24, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2BCKrVI>.
4. Abby Broyles, "'Fentanyl is very, very powerful,' Dozens of Oklahomans die from overdose on painkiller," *KFOR-TV*, <http://bit.ly/2rSgYHE>.
5. Brianna Bailey, "Fatal doses of fentanyl showing up in heroin, counterfeit prescription drugs," *NewsOK*, updated October 1, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2DN2xul>.
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. Nolan Clay, "Closed Oklahoma City male dysfunction clinic's owners put on probation, fined," *NewsOK*, April 9, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2nnfksc>.