

# The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Washington

**Seattle, March 2016: DEA agents dismantled a fentanyl lab in a house on the city's southside**

**Yakima, November 2017: Police warned that counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl had caused multiple overdoses**

**Puyallup, October 2017: A search of a van turned up 25 pounds of fentanyl—enough to make over 3 million fatal doses**

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.

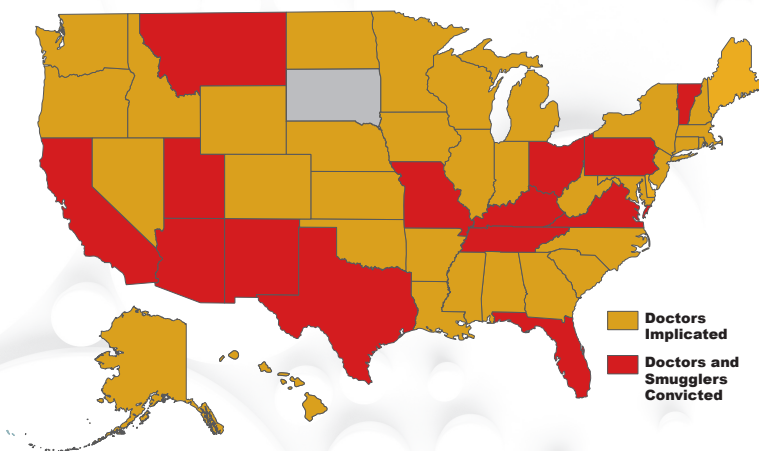
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Washingtonians. In March 2016, DEA agents raided a house in Seattle that was being used as a fentanyl lab. Police in Yakima issued warnings in May 2016 and November 2017 about overdoses and deaths from fentanyl-laced counterfeit prescription drugs being sold on the streets. **The Department of Health reported an 86% rise in confirmed fentanyl deaths between 2015 and 2016.**

## 59 Washington Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

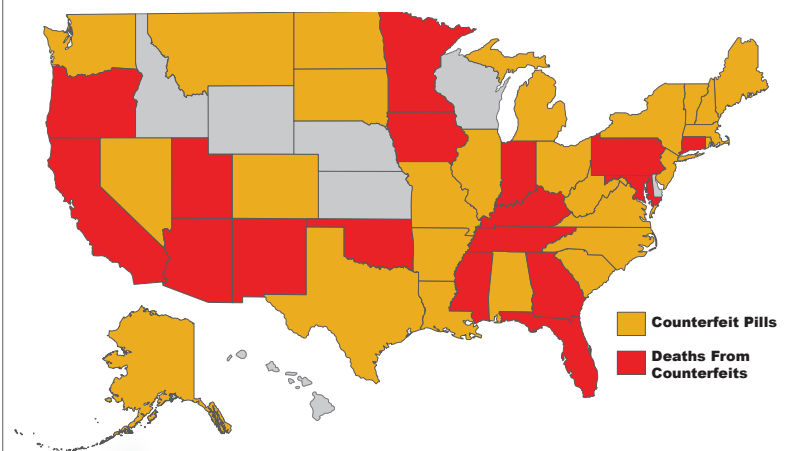
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Washington as well. 59 different medical practices in Washington have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved 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 Washingtonian lives at risk of serious injury or death.**

**Fake Cancer Drug Crisis**



**Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths**



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

**Based on reported investigations.**

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

## Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Made with Fentanyl

- November 2017:** Five overdoses due to counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl caused Yakima Public Health authorities to issue a warning.<sup>1</sup>
- October 2017:** A van left parked in a Puyallup, Washington apartment complex turned out to contain 25 pounds of fentanyl, along with 12 pounds of amphetamines and two pounds of heroin, connected to Mexican cartels.<sup>2</sup>
- October 2017:** Public Health—Seattle & King County announced that Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory tests revealed a batch of pills that resembled oxycodone were actually counterfeit pills made with fentanyl.<sup>3</sup>
- August 2017:** Federal prosecutors accused Seattle resident Gregory L. Smith of importing pounds of raw fentanyl from China and then selling it to American drug dealers via Bitcoin.<sup>4</sup>
- May 2017:** The Washington State Department of Health reported that Washington experienced 70 lab-confirmed fentanyl deaths in 2016, an 86% increase from the previous year.<sup>5</sup>
- May 2016:** Counterfeit Xanax and Percocet made with fentanyl was implicated in two deaths and several overdoses in Yakima.<sup>6</sup>
- March, 2016:** Two Seattle roommates faced charges in federal court that they manufactured fentanyl in their home for use and sale.<sup>7</sup>

## Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- April 2015:** The FDA sent warning letters to four Washington doctors and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.<sup>8</sup>
- 2012–2013:** The FDA warned six Washington doctors offices and more than 500 across the country to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.<sup>9</sup>
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 doctors, 21 in Washington, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>10</sup>

## Counterfeit and Misbranded Medication

- October 2017:** Rick Marschall of the Natural Healing Clinic was sent to prison for two months for prescribing the misbranded steroid HCG as a weight-loss treatment. It was his second conviction.<sup>11</sup>
- June 2016:** Jason Yoon was sentenced to six months for importing and distributing counterfeit goods to approximately 1,300 small businesses in western Washington, including imported “sex pills” that contained undeclared sildenafil and tadalafil, prescription drugs which can cause serious side effects if taken incorrectly or combined with alcohol.<sup>12</sup>
- October 2010:** Canadian father and son plead guilty to receiving delivery of nearly 3,000 counterfeit erectile dysfunction pills shipped from China. The pair had the pills delivered to a Seattle post box.<sup>13</sup>

## Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned more than 23 Washington 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>14</sup>
- July 2013:** The FDA warned five doctors and medical practices in Washington to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.<sup>15</sup>

## Footnotes

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3. Sharon Bogan, "Illicit Fentanyl Found Locally In Fake Opioid Pills," *Public Health Insider*, October 2, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2nMxPqS>.
4. Levi Pulkkinen, "Feds: Bitcoin Drug Dealer Trafficked China-Sourced Fentanyl," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 15, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2GWmqNb>.
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7. "Charges: Enterprising addicts cooked painkillers in Seattle home," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 29, 2016. Accessed February 7, 2018. <http://bit.ly/2GVxJEs>.
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 Counterfeit or Unapproved Prescription Drugs, 2012–2014," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last updated June 12, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
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11. Sarah Sharp, "Naturopathic Clinic Owner Sentenced to Two Months in Prison," *Peninsula Daily News*, October 22, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2E6NgEH>.
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14. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
15. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.