

# The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Connecticut

**Derby, December 2016:  
25kg of fentanyl, more than  
8 million fatal doses, seized  
in a tractor trailer**

**Hamden, March 2017:  
A 30-year-old man died after  
taking a fake oxycodone pill**

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.

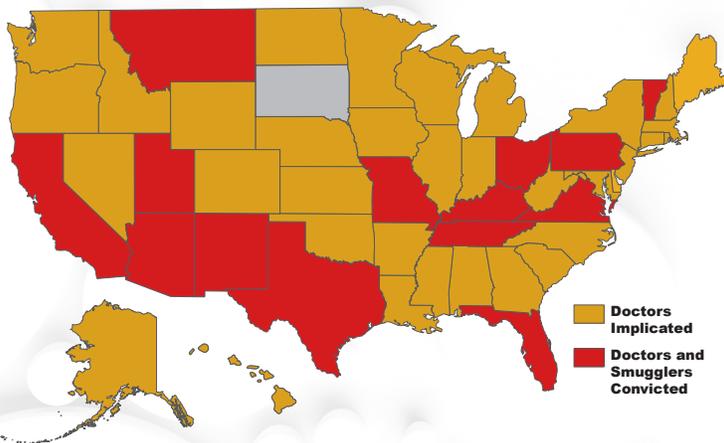
Fentanyl is a serious threat in Connecticut. Authorities have seized the drug in **Hartford**, **New Britain**, and **Derby**, and found fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills in **Essex**. In March, 2017, a **Hamden** man died after taking a counterfeit oxycodone laced with fentanyl.

## 25 Connecticut Doctors Implicated in Fake Drug Rings

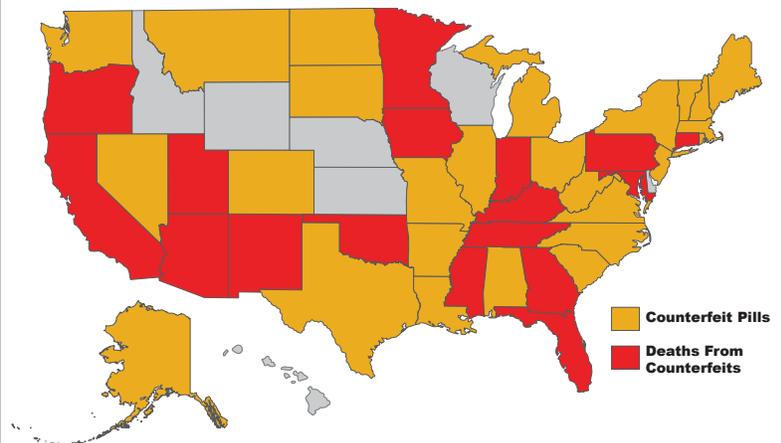
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Connecticut as well. 25 medical practices in Connecticut have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lots relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or fake, and if they died from a lack of treatment.

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

**Fake Cancer Drug Crisis**



**Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths**



# Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in Connecticut (2011–2018)

**Based on reported investigations.**

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

## Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- January 2018:** An Essex man pleaded guilty to charges related to distributing fentanyl and other drugs. Investigation showed that he had purchased 500 fentanyl-laced oxycodone in April 2017.<sup>1</sup>
- June 2017:** Federal law enforcement confiscated 20 kilograms of heroin mixed with fentanyl in Hartford.<sup>2</sup> Authorities also seized 2.5 kilograms of fentanyl (as well as 50,000 counterfeit Xanax pills and other drugs) in New Britain in May 2016, and another 25 kilograms in a tractor trailer on Route 34 Derby in December 2016.<sup>3</sup>
- March 2017:** A 30-year-old man in Hamden died after ingesting a counterfeit oxycodone made of fentanyl, acetaminophen and dipyrone.<sup>4</sup>
- September 2016:** 11 members of a police SWAT team became ill after being exposed to suspected fentanyl during a drug bust in Hartford.<sup>5</sup>

## Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- April 2015:** The FDA warned 271 medical practices, five in Connecticut, to stop buying medicine from unlicensed drug distributor Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.<sup>6</sup>
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, 3 in Connecticut, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>7</sup>
- 2012–2013:** The FDA warned more than 500 medical practices across the country—3 in Connecticut—to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.<sup>8</sup>

## Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned 13 Connecticut 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>9</sup>
- July 2013:** The FDA warned a medical practice in Connecticut to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.<sup>10</sup>

## Other Counterfeit Drugs

- April 2017:** A federal grand jury in Bridgeport indicted Pyotr Levashov, charging that he controlled a network of more than 100,000 compromised computers that sent phony emails advertising counterfeit drugs, harvested users' logins and installed malware that intercepted bank account passwords.<sup>11</sup>
- August 2016:** A former Newtown police sergeant was sentenced to 16 months in federal prison for his part in a distribution ring that imported ingredients from China so that they could manufacture and distribute steroids to area bodybuilders.<sup>12</sup>
- February 2011:** A Providence, Rhode Island resident pleaded guilty to smuggling erectile dysfunction drugs from China that were falsely labeled as herbal dietary supplements. She sold them to retailers and distributors in Rhode Island, Connecticut and elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

## Footnotes

1. Jessica Lerner, "Essex Man Used Dark Web to Acquire, Distribute Drugs," *The Middletown Press*, January 10, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2Fm6dja>.
2. Jill Konopka, "New Details Emerge on Historic Hartford Drug Bust," *NBC Connecticut*, June 30, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2Fmz476>.
3. Lisa Backus, "Bristol Man Sentenced in New Britain Drug Bust," *New Britain Herald*, December 12, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2Fh16Vz>; and Olivia Roos, "What Is Being Done About the Fentanyl Crisis in Connecticut," *NBC Connecticut*, July 6, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2D5BJzW>.
4. Nicholas Rondinone, "Deadly Fentanyl Disguised As Prescription Pills," *Hartford Courant*, July 3, 2017, <http://cour.at/2FmfGqN>.
5. Dave Collins, "11 Connecticut Cops Sickened During Heroin and Fentanyl Bust," *The Associated Press*, September 14, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2Fixilj>.
6. "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>.
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..." <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
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10. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors..." <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
11. "Russian Accused of Running Spam Ring is Indicted in US," *The Norwich Bulletin*, April 21, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2Ff4CzT>.
12. Jim Shay, "Ex-Newtown Cop Gets 16 Months in Steroid Arrest," *NewsTimes*, August 25, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2FiL2To>.
13. "February 9, 2011: Rhode Island Woman Pleads Guilty to Smuggling Misbranded Drugs from China," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, <http://bit.ly/2D6cRIC>.