

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Arkansas

Pope County, October 2017:
State police seized 15 pounds of fentanyl (more than 2 million fatal doses) during a traffic stop on I-40

Little Rock, May 2017:
50 Little Rock residents were indicted for trafficking fentanyl and other drugs

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.

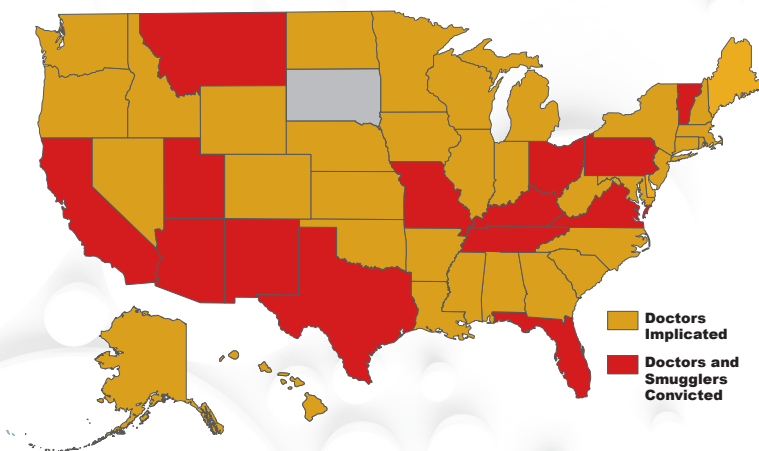
Fentanyl is a serious threat in Arkansas. The state had the second the second highest opioid prescription rate in the country in 2016. **Arkansas's crime laboratory identified 56 samples of fentanyl, in both pill and powder form, in the first three months of 2017.** The lab only positively identified 66 samples as fentanyl in all of 2016. Authorities seized more than 15 pounds of illicit fentanyl in 2017.

17 Clinics in Arkansas Implicated in Fake Drug Rings

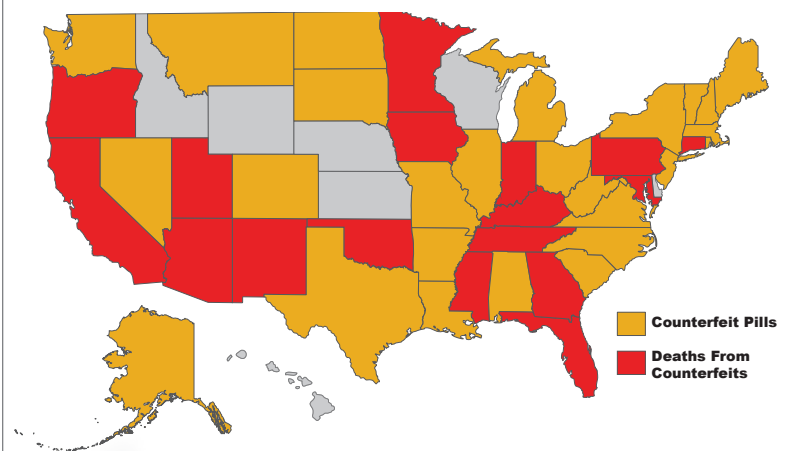
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Arkansas as well. 17 medical practices in Arkansas have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or fake, and if they died from a lack of treatment.

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

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



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

Based on reported investigations.

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

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- February 2018:** Police in Little Rock reported finding between three and five overdoses in which fentanyl was involved in less than two months.¹
- October 2017:** State police seized fifteen pounds of fentanyl during a traffic stop on Interstate 40.²
- August 2017:** CDC reports showed that Arkansas had the second highest opioid prescription rate in the country—enough prescriptions were written for every Arkansas resident to have a bottle.³
- May 2017:** Authorities indicted 61 people, 50 of whom were from Little Rock, for their roles in drug rings that distributed methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, and crack cocaine. Officers seized half a pound of fentanyl, as well as other drugs, over the course of the 18-month investigation.⁴
- January–March 2017:** Arkansas's crime laboratory identified 56 samples of fentanyl, in powder and counterfeit pill form. In all of 2016, only 66 positive fentanyl samples were identified.⁵

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

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

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned three Arkansas 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.⁹
- July 2013:** The FDA warned four medical practices in Arkansas to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.¹⁰

Other Counterfeit Drugs

- May 2014:** Charles and Brenda Edwards, who co-owned Houston-based Cumberland Distribution, pleaded guilty to selling \$50 million in secondhand HIV/AIDS, antipsychotics, antidepressants, acid reflux, blood pressure and diabetes treatments to American pharmacies. Tristate Management Group, a company in Texarkana, was implicated in concealing the source of the drugs, which were often damaged or expired.¹¹
- September 2011:** Dr. Kelly Dean Shrump of Pine Bluff was sentenced to 5 years probation with 200 hours of community service per year, and to pay approximately \$279,000 in restitution and forfeitures for implanting illegally imported IUDs in his patients without their consent and falsely billing Medicaid for them.¹²

Footnotes

1. Price McKeon, "Fentanyl in the Capital City," *Arkansas Matter*, February 9, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2tVjNZQ>.
2. Travis Simpson, "State Police Recover \$6 Million in Fentanyl," *The Courier* (Russellville, AR), October 1, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2HBPyCh>.
3. Karen Tricot Steward, "Arkansas Has Nation's Second-Highest Rate Of Opioid Prescriptions," *KUAR*, August 24, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2FLZdwa>.
4. "Operation Dismantles Major Little Rock Drug Rings, 52 Alleged Drug Traffickers Now In Custody," U.S. Department of Justice, May 24, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2FHla4>.
5. Scott Carroll and Eric Besson, "Fentanyl Abuse on the Upswing in State, Nation," *Arkansas Press-Democrat*, July 17, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2FJoKWV>.
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>.
9. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
10. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
11. "Two Plead Guilty In Prescription Drug Diversion Scheme," US Department of Justice, May 8, 2014, <http://bit.ly/2FPdo3U>.
12. "Pine Bluff Doctor Sentenced in Health Case Fraud and Misbranding Case," U.S. Department of Justice, September 30, 2011, <http://bit.ly/2FHAgCa>.