

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Wisconsin

Menasha, July 2017: A police officer poisoned by fentanyl while responding to a drug overdose death

59 Milwaukee residents died after taking fentanyl in the first six months of 2017

Wisconsin saw a 109 percent increase in ER visits to treat opioid overdoses over an 18-month period

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.

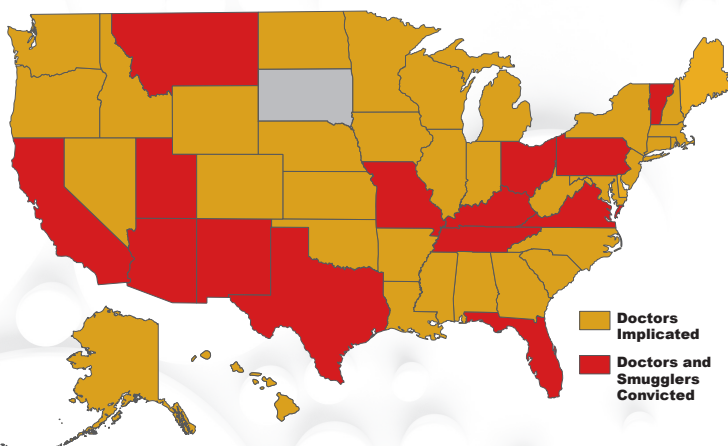
Fentanyl is a serious threat in Wisconsin. **In July 2017, a police officer needed two doses of naloxone after being exposed to fentanyl** while investigating an overdose death. That same month, Wisconsin's Crime Lab announced that all officers could test unidentified powders at their facility. Two additional officers in Waukesha County were treated in February 2018.

27 Wisconsin Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

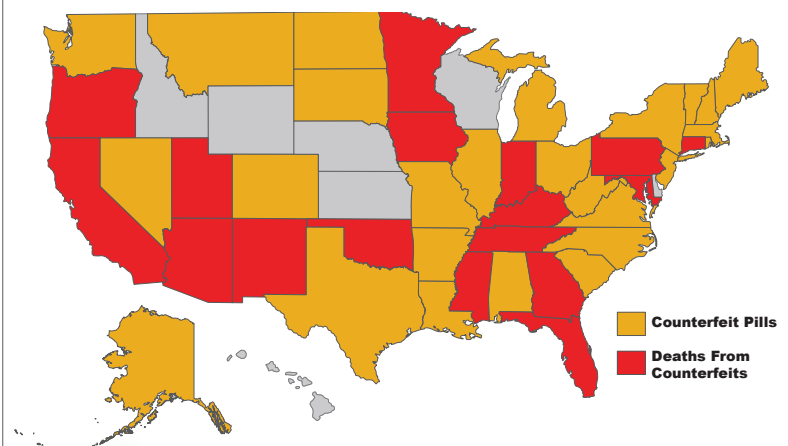
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Wisconsin as well. 27 different medical practices in Wisconsin have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved 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 Wisconsin lives at risk of serious injury or death.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



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

Based on reported investigations.

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

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- March 2018:** Data analysis from the CDC showed that hospitalizations for opioid overdoses increased in the state by 109 percent between July 2016 and September 2017.¹
- July 2017:** A Menasha police officer needed two doses of naloxone after being exposed to fentanyl after responding to a drug overdose death.²
- July 2017:** The state Crime Lab announced that police officers can use their facility to test unidentified powders due to the risk posed by fentanyl.³
- July 2017:** The medical examiner's office announced that fentanyl caused 59 deaths in Milwaukee in the first half of 2017.⁴
- June 2017:** The discovery of fentanyl and other drugs triggered a two-week lockdown and a search of the entire Oshkosh Correctional Institution.⁵
- March 2017:** Wisconsin experienced its first carfentanil death with the death of a 48-year-old man in Milwaukee.⁶

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- April 2015:** The FDA sent warning letters to two Wisconsin doctors and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.⁷
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including three doctors offices in Wisconsin, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁸

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** 14 doctors offices and practices in Wisconsin were among more than 1,227 doctors nationwide who received warning letters from the FDA to stop buying infusion drugs from TC Medical Group, which sold more than \$33 million worth of non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Botox.⁹
- July 2013:** The FDA warned three doctors and medical practices in Wisconsin to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.¹⁰
- November 2012:** Three Wisconsin doctors were among the 350 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of Botox from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.¹¹

Other Medications

- August 2016:** Pharmacist and author Marla Ahlgrimm was sentenced to two years probation and to forfeit more than \$200,000 after she pleaded guilty to mail and wire fraud charges for her part in a drug importation scheme. With Nevada pharmacologist Balbir Bhogal, Ahlgrimm illegally imported medications from India to be sold to the U.S. customers of a Costa Rica-based fake online pharmacy.¹²
- September 2012:** Two Wisconsin doctors were among the 23 U.S. doctors that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of the osteoporosis injectable medications Prolia and Aclasta from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs.com subsidiary.¹³

Footnotes

1. Shamane Mills, "ER Visits For Opioid Overdose Double in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Public Radio*, March 6, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2JHQTQ7>.
2. Andy Thompson, "Menasha Officer's Close Call Highlights Dangers of Fentanyl Exposure," *Post Crescent*, July 22, 2017, <http://post.cr/2FYd42O>.
3. Lexy Brodt, "To Cut Risk of Exposure to Fentanyl, Police Can Now Test Substances at State Crime Lab," *Wisconsin State Journal*, July 20, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2IBITjA>.
4. Ivan Moreno, "18 Milwaukee Deaths Blamed on Fentanyl Derivative This Year," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 3, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2FOroQS>.
5. "Drug Activity Prompted Lockdown of Wisconsin Prison," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 13, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2GP5rg4>.
6. "Wisconsin Has First Death From Drug 10,000 Times More Potent Than Morphine," *WISN*, April 17, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2IGQY6z>.
7. "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>.
8. "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>.
9. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
10. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
11. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
12. "Wisconsin Pharmacist and Nevada Pharmacologist Charged with Smuggling Counterfeit Pharmaceuticals Using a Costa Rican Internet Pharmacy," US Department of Justice, September 12, 2014, <http://bit.ly/2GUMdpL>; Order of Forfeiture and Judgment, Case 1:14-cr-00374-JFB, US District Court, Eastern District of New York, April 15, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2GgTYYS>.
13. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.