

# The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Tennessee

**October 2016, Murfreesboro:** Five people charged in federal court with producing counterfeit Percocet using fentanyl that caused two deaths and sent others to the hospital

**February 2018, Sullivan County:** A search of a car stopped by police on I-40 turned up 4,400 OxyContin pills believed to be made with fentanyl

**July 2017, Coalmont:** Police arrested two residents they say distributed more than 100,000 illegal prescription pills and counterfeit pills made with fentanyl

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.**

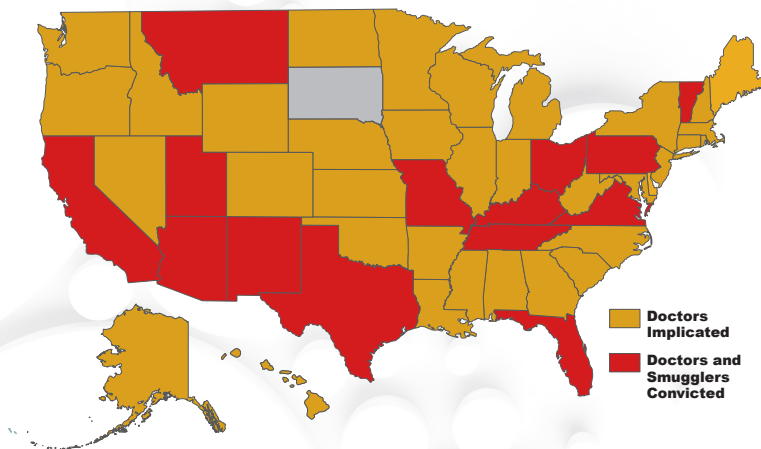
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Tennessee. **Agents from Tennessee's Dangerous Drugs Task Force seized 12 pill presses used to make counterfeit pills over the course of 2017.** In July 2016, Rutherford County saw 15 people overdose in just a single day from a batch of counterfeit Percocet pills being sold on the street.

## 52 Tennessee Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

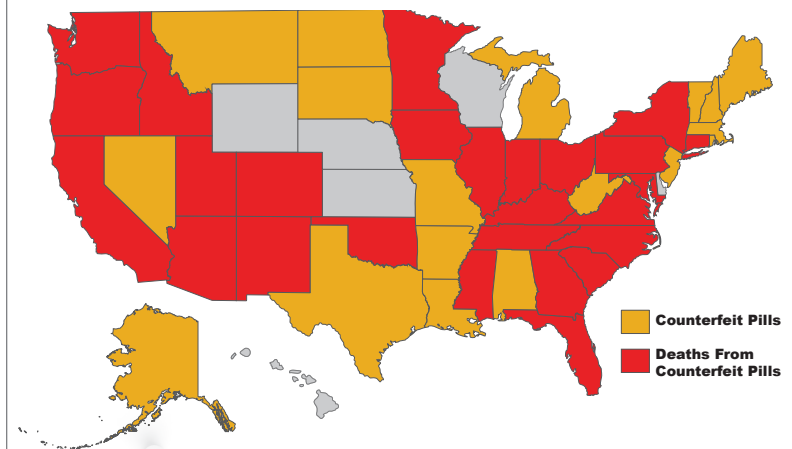
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Tennessee as well. 52 different medical practices in Tennessee have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families like those treated by Dr. William Kincaid of Johnson City, who continued purchasing non FDA-approved chemotherapy medications from Canadian supplier QSP even after the clinic's nurses raised concerns about the authenticity of the medicines, 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 Tennessee lives at risk of serious injury or death.**

**Fake Cancer Drug Crisis**



**Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths**



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

**Based on reported investigations.**

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

## Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- February 2018:** Police pulled over a car on I-40E en route to Sullivan County and found the driver in possession of 4,400 OxyContin pills believed to be laced with fentanyl.<sup>1</sup>
- February 2018:** A Nashville mother warned other parents after a counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl killed her 20-year-old son.<sup>2</sup>
- December 2017:** Agents from Tennessee's Dangerous Drugs Task Force seized 12 pill presses used to make counterfeit pills over the course of 2017.<sup>3</sup>
- July 2017:** Police arrested two Coalmont residents they say distributed more than 100,000 illegal prescription pills and counterfeit pills made with fentanyl.<sup>4</sup>
- October 2016:** Federal prosecutors charged five people with producing counterfeit Percocet using fentanyl that caused two deaths and many hospitalizations in Murfreesboro in July.<sup>5</sup>
- July 2016:** Authorities launched a multi-agency investigation after a massive increase in the number of people overdosing on counterfeit Percocet pills. Rutherford County saw 15 overdoses on a single day.<sup>6</sup>
- June 2016:** Police warned the public after test results showed various seized prescription pills were counterfeits made with fentanyl.<sup>7</sup>
- March 2016:** A woman in Knoxville described how her sister and her sister's friend were lucky to be alive after being poisoned by counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl.<sup>8</sup>
- May 2015:** Forensic scientists at the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation tested 30mg oxycodone pills and found that they were counterfeits made with fentanyl.<sup>9</sup>

## Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- August 2016:** Karen Chamberlin, the office manager at Chattanooga Gyn-Oncology pleaded guilty in federal court to ordering non FDA-approved oncology drugs from Quality Specialty Products (QSP) in Winnipeg, Canada.<sup>10</sup>
- March 2016:** 19 doctors offices and practices in Tennessee were among more than 1,227 doctors nationwide who received warning letters from the FDA to stop buying infusion drugs from Canadian supplier TC Medical Group, which sold more than \$33 million worth of non-FDA approved medications.<sup>11</sup>
- April 2015:** The FDA warned one Tennessee medical practice and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.<sup>12</sup>
- February 2015:** Dickinson Medical Associates agreed to pay civil damages in excess of \$500,000 to settle charges that the medical practice used a non FDA-approved cancer drug on their patients and billed as if they were using the FDA-approved medication.<sup>13</sup>
- June 2013:** Dr. William Kincaid received a two-year prison sentence after he pleaded guilty to receiving misbranded drugs with intent to defraud or mislead. Kincaid purchased non FDA-approved cancer drugs for use at the oncology clinic he where he was a partner. Even after nurses raised concerns about the authenticity of the drugs, he continued to purchase them from Canadian supplier QSP.<sup>14</sup>
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, 21 in Tennessee, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>15</sup>

## Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

**November 2012:** Seven Tennessee 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.<sup>16</sup>

## Other Drugs

**May 2013:** Pharmacist Robert Harshbarger of Kingsport pleaded guilty in federal court to one count of distributing a misbranded drug and one count of health care fraud after he admitted to distributing a non FDA-approved iron sucrose to be used on dialysis patients.<sup>17</sup>

---

## Footnotes

1. Robert Sorell, "Potentially Deadly Drugs Halted En Route to Sullivan County," *Bristol Herald Courier*, February 13, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2JyrsV6>.
2. Dennis Ferrier, "FERRIER FILES: A Warning for Parents After Fentanyl-Laced Xanax Kills 20-Year-Old," *Fox17 News Nashville*, February 1, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2l6hZ8X>.
3. Katherine Marchand, "Tennessee Seizes Record Number of Pill Presses for Counterfeit Drugs," *News Channel 9*, December 29, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2JhxBzW>.
4. Ben Benton, "Probe Nets 2 Arrests, Seizure of Pills, Guns and Cash in Grundy, Marion Counties," *Times Free Press*, July 27, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2ybmqsu>.
5. "5 More Charged With Drug Conspiracy in Middle Tennessee Overdose Outbreak," *FoxNews.com*, October 28, 2016, <https://fxn.ws/2l9oGEa>.
6. "PAST 72 HOURS: Massive Increase in Overdose Cases in Murfreesboro," *WGNradio.com*, July 7, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2lc3Qax>.
7. Xavier Smith, "Law Enforcement Officials Warn of Fentanyl, Fake Pills," *Lebanon Democrat*, June 1, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2Jhwoc7>.
8. Lauren Davis, "Deadly New 'Super Pill' Found in Knoxville," *WVLT 8*, March 31, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2LQdxq3>.
9. "Warning Issued About Counterfeit Prescription Pills," *The Chattanooga*, February 8, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2t3xJx7>.
10. "Office Manager For Chattanooga Cancer Treatment Center Pleads Guilty to Ordering Drugs Not Approved by the FDA," *The Chattanooga*, August 2, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2HJmxLr>.
11. "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>.
12. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors ...," <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
13. "Dickson, Tennessee Medical Practice to Pay More Than Half A Million Dollars to Settle False Claims Act Allegations," U.S. Department of Justice, February 23, 2015, <http://bit.ly/2sT7NEk>.
14. "Johnson City Physician Sentenced To Serve Two Years In Prison For Unapproved Foreign Drugs," U.S. Department of Justice, June 11, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2JzYR1M>.
15. "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>.
16. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...," <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
17. "Pharmacist's Plea: Kidney Dialysis Patients Received Misbranded Drugs," U.S. Department of Justice, May 21, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2HM1QhP>.