The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Kansas

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 Kansas. The two fentanyl seizures by police in Kansas during May 2017 were enough to make over 6.9 million fatal doses. More recently, in January 2018, a traffic stop in Dickinson County ended with the arrest of two individuals and the seizure of 2.5 pounds of powdered fentanyl.

May 2017, Kansas City: Police seized 16 pounds of powdered fentanyl during a raid of a house

July 2016, Sedgwick County: Sheriff’s deputy exposed to fentanyl while processing evidence

10 Kansas Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Kansas as well. 10 different medical practices in Kansas 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 Kansas lives at risk of serious injury or death.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis

Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths

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Based on reported investigations. Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of Kansas residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Made with Fentanyl

June 2018: Carlos Fernando Fernandez-Gonzalez received 63 months in prison after he was found with more than 30 pounds of fentanyl during a traffic stop in Russell County in May 2017.

January 2018: A traffic stop in Dickinson County resulted in two arrests and the seizure of 2.5 pounds of fentanyl powder.

August 2017: A study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine listed Kansas as one of the states across the United States that was under-reporting opioid overdoses deaths.

May 2017: DEA agents found 16 pounds of fentanyl during a raid on a house in Kansas City.

October 2016: A news report referenced an incident in July when a Sedgwick County Sheriff deputy was exposed to fentanyl.

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

May 2013: The FDA warned 780 medical practices, six in Kansas, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

June 2018: Kathleen Stegman of Leawood pleaded guilty and received a one-year sentence for illegally importing and injecting her clients with non-FDA approved beauty injections including Botox, Dysport, Restylane, Perlane and Sculptra.

March 2017: Joel Erskin, a physician’s assistant in Garden City, pleaded guilty and was permanently banned from providing medical services in Kansas after he purchased and used non-FDA approved Botox on his clients while he did not have a medical license.

March 2016: The FDA warned two Kansas 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.

July 2013: The FDA warned two medical practices in Kansas to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.

Other Drugs

May 2015: A 20/20 investigation about the sale of counterfeit drugs in the United States revealed that two storefronts—one in Overland Park and another in Wichita—helped American citizens order non-FDA approved prescription drugs from unlicensed foreign pharmacies.

November 2013: Tennessee pharmacist Robert Harshbarger received a 48-month prison sentence for distributing a misbranded drug and for health care fraud after selling non-FDA approved iron sucrose that Kansas Dialysis Services, LC administered to their patients.

June 2011: Manuel Calvelo of Belgium received a 48-month prison sentence after being convicted in Kansas of operating an internet pharmacy that sold misbranded and counterfeit drugs and controlled substances.
Footnotes


