

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Maine

**Surry, February 2018:
Officers discover fake
fentanyl pills during bust**

**Knox County, October 2017:
Man arrested at airport with
over 100 fake oxycodone pills
suspected to be 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.**

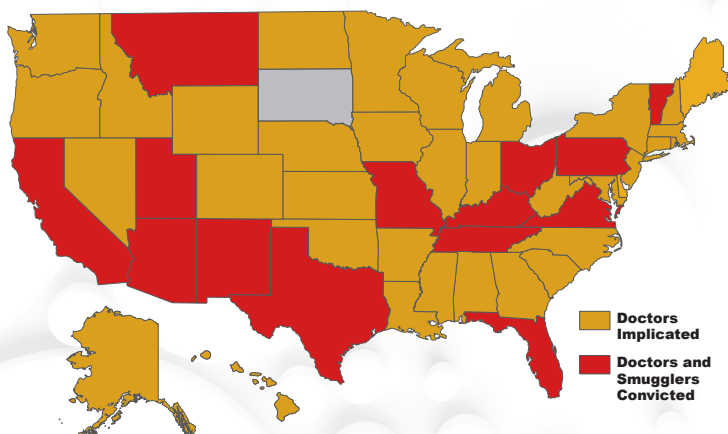
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Mainers. In October 2018, the Surry Police Department reported finding 91 fentanyl pills during a drug bust. In 2017, 418 people died from drug overdoses. The overall rate of increase was 11%, but there was a **27% increase in deaths from the previous year blamed specifically on illegal fentanyl and fentanyl analogues.** Drug traffickers put fentanyl or one of its analogues into the fake pills they make using pill presses and sell them to unsuspecting people on the street.

8 Maine Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

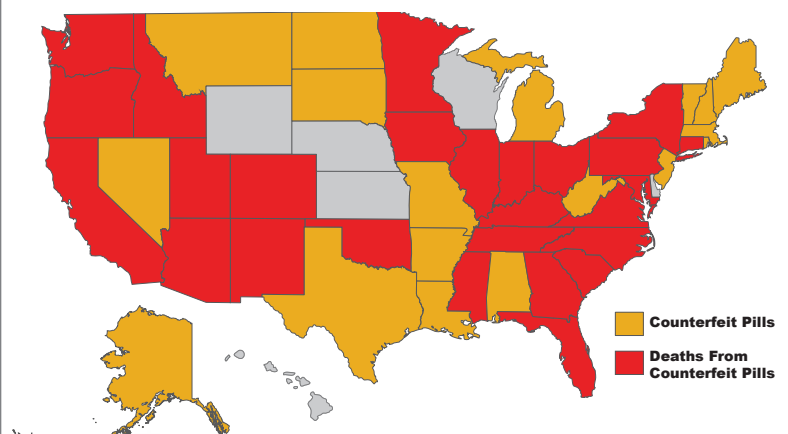
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Maine as well. Eight different medical practices in Maine have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones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

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



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

Based on reported investigations.

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

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- February 2018:** Statewide 418 people in Maine died of drug overdoses in 2017 with authorities blaming the increase from the previous year on fentanyl and fentanyl analogues.¹
- February 2018:** Police charged a Surry man with trafficking after police discover 91 pressed fentanyl pills in his room.²
- October 2017:** Lewiston man arrested at Knox County Regional Airport in possession of over 100 counterfeit oxycodone pills that are allegedly made with fentanyl.³
- November 2016:** A Utah-based drug counterfeiting operation shipped buyers in Maine fentanyl-laced counterfeit oxycodone pills.⁴

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 doctors, one in Maine, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁵

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2015:** Six Maine doctors and more than 1,200 nationwide were sent letters telling them to stop buying from Canadian distributor TC Medical, which sold 22 different kinds of non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Botox.⁶
- November 2012:** One Maine doctor was among over 350 U.S. medical practices that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of Botox from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.⁷

Other Counterfeit Drugs

- March 2017:** Parent company of Canadian online pharmacy that marketed pharmaceuticals to Mainers as Canada Drug Center⁸ during Maine's brief period of allowing drug importation indicted for selling misbranded drugs to Americans.⁹
- November 2013:** Tests performed by Dr. Kenneth McCall of the Maine Board of Pharmacy on drugs purchased from Canada Drug Center found all were substandard, one contained an unknown contaminant, and none of them were from Canada. Independent testing performed by WGME News found similar results.
- Maine Board of Pharmacy President, Dr. Kenneth McCall saw ads for an online pharmacy called Canada Drug Center, so ordered medication to test it for genuineness. Instead of genuine drugs from Canada, he received drugs from India, Turkey, and Mauritius. The active ingredients in the drugs were not sufficient, ranging from 58% to 77% of the stated dosage, and one contained an unknown contaminant. Parallel testing by WGME News found similar results.¹⁰

Footnotes

1. Kate Cough, "Drug Overdose Deaths Continued to Climb in 2017," *The Ellsworth American*, February 26th, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2I6UBBw>.
2. Jennifer Osborn, "Surry Man Charged With Trafficking," *The Ellsworth American*, February 14, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2Gtt5B2>.
3. Stephen Betts, "Man Accused of Trying to Deliver Deadly Drugs to Island," *Village Soup-Knox*, October 11, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2pHNati>.
4. Superseding Indictment, U.S. District Court, District of Utah, Central Division, Case No. 2:16-cr-00631-DAK, <http://bit.ly/2mGXeKE>.
5. "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>.
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...," <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
8. "Addendum list attached to Quantum Solutions Information Sheet Filing," Department of Justice, March 27, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2plfnQI>.
9. "3 Canadians and Their Company Charged With Conspiring to Sell Foreign-Made Drugs to Western Pennsylvania Pharmacists," Department of Justice, March 28, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2oDuqfT>.
10. "Maine Importation," Partnership for Safe Medicines, April 15, 2014, <https://bit.ly/2DXPFfQ>.
11. "Kenneth McCall conducts lab analysis for WGME news investigation of online prescription drugs," *University of New England*, November 14, 2013, <https://bit.ly/2GrNHK3>.