

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Ohio

September 2013: 7 doctors prosecuted for purchasing counterfeit cancer medication

June 2018: A Clark County drug bust found 20 pounds of fentanyl, enough to kill 3–4 million people

December 2017: 20-year-old Riverside man died after taking fake Xanax laced 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.

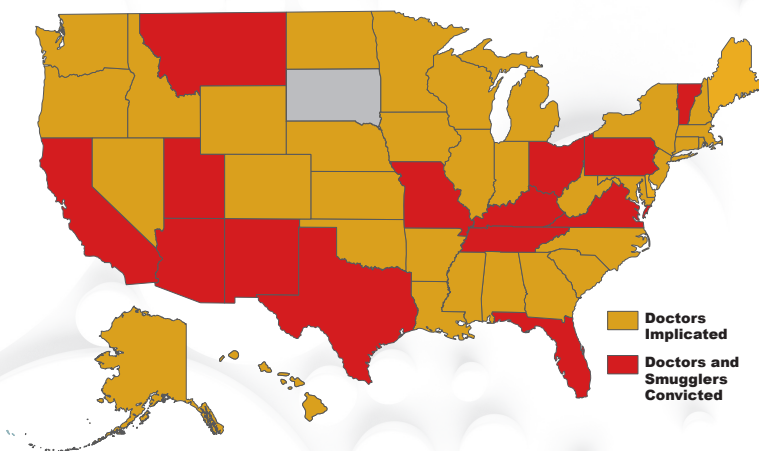
Fentanyl is a deadly threat to Ohio. In March 2016, counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl was discovered in the Miami Valley area. In July of that year, Akron authorities blamed fentanyl for the 17 overdoses that happened in that city on a single day. **Counterfeit pills made with fentanyl have since been seized in Franklin County, Cuyahoga County, Hamilton County, and the cities of Columbus and Dayton.** Authorities in Clark County saved as many as 4 million lives when they seized 20 pounds of fentanyl during a drug bust.

63 Ohio Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

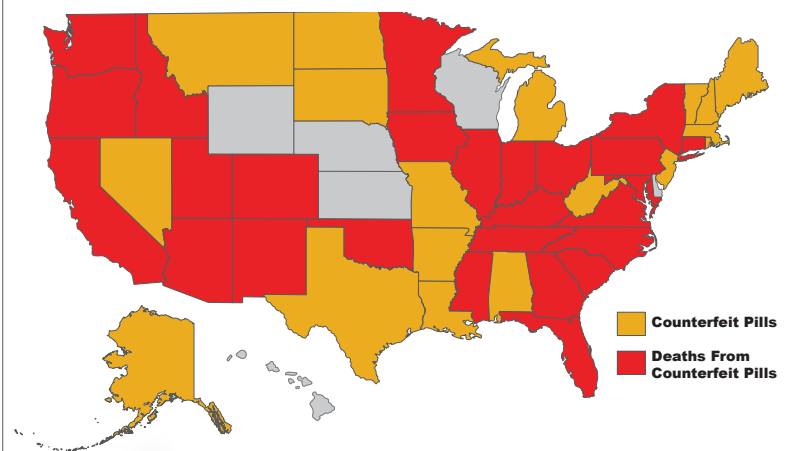
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Ohio as well. 63 different medical practices in Ohio have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or fake, and if they died from a lack of treatment. 🇺🇸

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

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in Ohio (2008–2018)

Based on reported investigations.

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

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- June 2018:** Almost 20 pounds of fentanyl seized in Clark County drug bust: enough to kill 3–4 million people.¹
- May 2018:** Federal prosecutors indicted three Ohio men found in possession of fentanyl pills marked as the less potent opioid oxycodone.²
- May 2018:** More than 45 people indicted for fentanyl sales and money laundering on behalf of the Sinaloa Cartel, including multiple defendants in Ohio.³
- March 2018:** Ohio man sentenced as part of Operation “Big Oak”⁴ after exposing a police officer to a near-fatal dose of fentanyl.⁵
- March 2018:** Postal Inspectors intercepted a package containing 1,500 fentanyl pills in Dayton.⁶
- March 2018:** Columbus man charged after police found an industrial pill press and almost 8 pounds of fentanyl in his home.⁷
- March 2018:** Nine people indicted in federal court for ordering fentanyl and carfentanil in bulk and selling the drugs in Akron and Lorain.⁸
- February 2018:** Police arrested seven people in Hamilton County after they were found with 9.3 pounds of heroin and fentanyl, 1,100 counterfeit oxycodone pills, and other drugs.⁹
- November 2017:** Operation Big Oak ended with one hundred suspects charged in 756-count fentanyl trafficking indictment. The defendants stand accused of funneling approximately one million potentially fatal doses of carfentanil and approximately 350,000 potentially fatal doses of fentanyl into Columbiana County alone.¹⁰
- August 12, 2017:** Three nurses at a Massillon hospital had to be treated with an overdose reversal drug after being exposed to suspected fentanyl.¹¹
- July 2017:** The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner’s Office found seized OxyContin pills were actually counterfeits that contained carfentanil.¹²
- July 2017:** Police arrested a Chinese wholesale supplier allegedly responsible for series of fentanyl deaths in Ohio.¹³
- June 2017:** Cincinnati couple accused of buying bulk fentanyl on the Internet that was shipped to the U.S. via Canada, and then selling it via their online store.¹⁴
- January 2017:** Franklin County Prosecutor issued a public warning about counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl after a man is arrested with hundreds of them in his possession.¹⁵
- September 2016:** The Cleveland-area saw seven overdose deaths in one day. There were 52 reported deaths caused by fentanyl and heroin in Cuyahoga County during the month of August.¹⁶
- August 2016:** Euclid resident Ryan Gaston pleaded guilty to federal drug distribution charges. A search of Gaston’s car and home found over 900 counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl.¹⁷
- April 2016:** Galloway man charged with reckless homicide for selling a fentanyl-laced oxycodone pills to a wheelchair bound Baltimore resident who died after taking one.¹⁸
- March 2016:** 20-year-old Bradley Stokesbury of Riverside died as the result of taking a counterfeit Xanax pill made with fentanyl.¹⁹
- March 2016:** Counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl discovered in Miami Valley.²⁰

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- April 2015:** The FDA sent warning letters to 5 Ohio doctors and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.²¹
- August 2013:** Charges were filed in federal court against seven Ohio oncologists for buying black market cancer medications to use on their patients.²² Doctors Ranjan Bhandari, Timmappa Bidari, Su-Chiao Kuom, David Fishman, Marwan Massouh, Poornanand Palaparty, and Hassan Tahsildar, all pleaded guilty in court and received probation in September 2013. Together, the seven doctors had to pay over \$2.5 million in fines.²³
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including 26 doctors offices in Ohio, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.²⁴

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** 17 doctors offices and practices in Ohio 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.²⁵
- July 2013:** The FDA warned 9 doctors and medical practices in Ohio to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.²⁶

Other Drugs and Medical Devices

- August 2014:** Dr. David Mandel of Mayfield Village pleaded guilty to charges related to buying black market rheumatology drugs in April.²⁷ In August, he received a sentence of probation and to paid more than \$650,000 in fines.²⁸
- September 2012:** One Ohio doctor was among the 23 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of Prolia and Aclasta from Canada Drugs owned subsidiaries.²⁹
- November 2008:** U.S. Marshals seized Celsius Laboratories' supply of the blood thinner Heparin that contained an ingredient sourced in China that was linked to hundreds of adverse events.³⁰

Footnotes

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