54 Colorado Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Colorado as well. 54 different medical practices in Colorado 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.

The Country Has Seen an Uproar 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 Colorado. In July 2019, police in Longmont arrested twenty members of a drug trafficking ring and seized nearly 1,500 counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl. The pills have also been found in Colorado Springs, and deaths caused by fake fentanyl pills have been reported in Boulder, Carbondale, and Grand Junction.
COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

September 2019: The Northern Colorado Drug Task Force arrested ten individuals and seized a variety of drugs, including counterfeit fentanyl pills.¹

July 2019: Law enforcement arrested 14 people with ties to a Colorado Springs drug ring and seized 3,100 fentanyl pills among 19 pounds of other drugs.²

July 2019: Police in Longmont arrested twenty members of a drug trafficking ring and seized nearly 1,500 counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl.¹ Boulder County District Attorney’s office indicted an additional individual in October.⁴

January 2019: Authorities announced federal indictments against five individuals for their roles in the counterfeit pill death of Grand Junction resident Ashley Romero, who died on June 11, 2018.⁵

January 2019: Police in Grand Junction seized 251 grams of suspected counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl during a traffic stop.⁶

August 2018: A police raid on an apartment in Grand Junction led to the seizure of a pill press and hundreds of counterfeit pills, including some made to look like Xanax and others that contained fentanyl.⁷

July 2018: A 27-year-old Grand Junction man pleaded not guilty to distributing the counterfeit oxycodone pill containing fentanyl that killed 30-year-old Jonathan Ellington on December 28, 2017 in Carbondale.⁸ In August 2018, authorities indicted a second individual, who allegedly made monthly trips to Mexico to purchase fentanyl pills. In January 2019, they also charged the second individual for his alleged role in the death of Grand Junction resident Ashley Romero.⁹

June 2018: 22-year-old Benjamin Schwartz pleaded guilty to selling several Xanax pills, one of which was a counterfeit laced with fentanyl, to Boulder resident Madeline Globe. Globe ingested the fake pill and died on August 10, 2017.¹⁰

October 2017: U.S. Department of Justice announced indictments against two Chinese nationals for distributing fentanyl across the U.S., including to addresses in Colorado.¹¹

August 2017: Charges were announced against Lakewood resident Carlos Ramirez. DEA agents discovered him in possession of 40 pounds of fentanyl at a hotel in The Bronx, NY. Police said this much fentanyl could cause 7 million overdoses.¹²

November 2016: A Utah-based drug counterfeiting operation shipped two buyers in Colorado a total of 30 fentanyl-laced counterfeit oxycodone pills.¹³

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

April 2015: The FDA warned three Colorado medical practices and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.¹⁴

May 2013: The FDA warned 780 medical practices, 12 in Colorado, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹⁵

2012–2013: A Colorado doctor was among more than 500 U.S. medical practices across the country warned to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.¹⁶
MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

March 2016:  The FDA warned 34 Colorado 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.17

November 2012:  Two Colorado doctors were 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.a

OTHER DRUGS

January 2011:  Chinese national Shengyang Zhou pleaded guilty in federal court in Denver to selling counterfeit versions of the weight loss drug Alli that were adulterated with sibutramine. One person who took the fake drugs suffered a stroke.19

FOOTNOTES