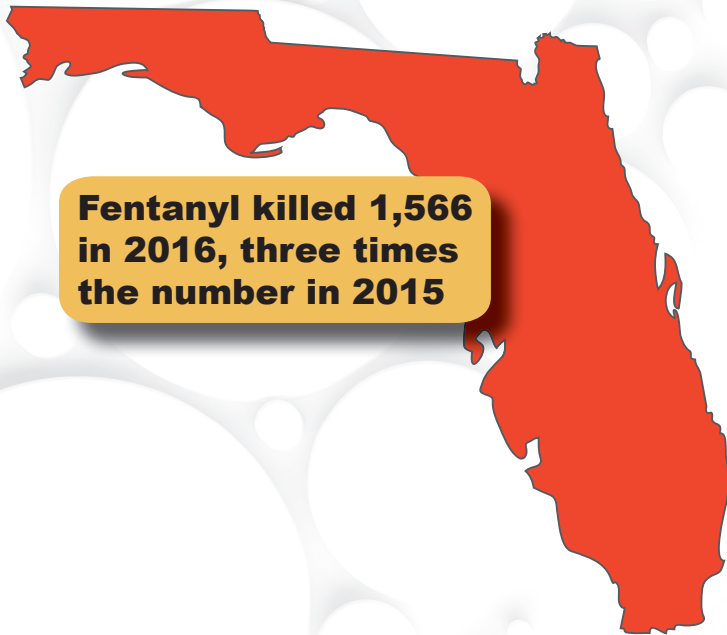


The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Florida



Florida has a unique problem with counterfeit medication, suffering black market Botox injuries, fake pharmacy storefronts, deadly silicone injections, shady wholesalers selling counterfeit drugs and medical devices, and one of the country's earliest fentanyl pill incidents, when **fake Xanax killed nine in May 2016**. Since then, counterfeit prescription pills masquerading as painkillers and Xanax have spread across the country.

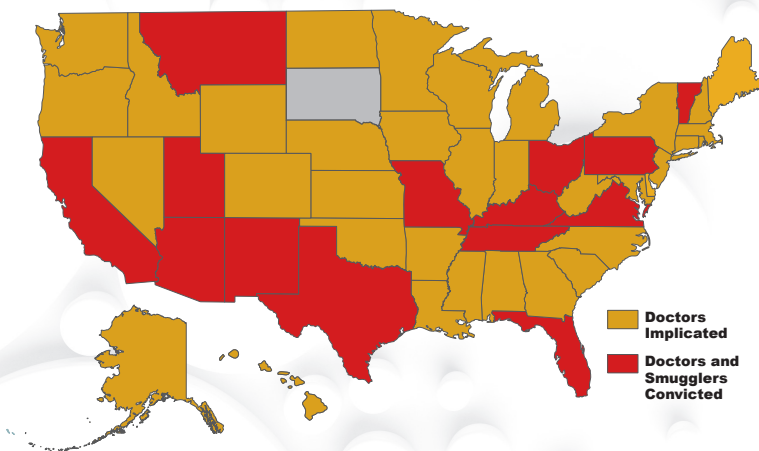
Fort Lauderdale locals Anthony Santos Gomes and Elizabeth Ton allegedly took part in a massive, multi-country fentanyl pill distribution ring supervised from a Canadian prison. Two Chinese nationals shipped Americans bulk fentanyl and pill presses to make counterfeit pills via the mail and international parcel delivery services. Beginning in 2013, thousands of these bulk packages were sent to co-conspirators like Gomes and Ton.

325 Florida Doctors Implicated in Fake Drug Rings

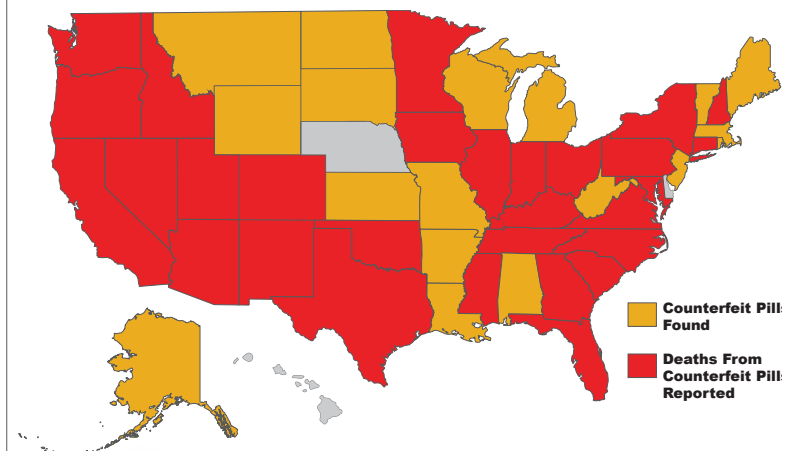
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Florida as well. 325 different medical practices in Florida have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Two Florida medical professionals, Dr. Anda Norbergs and Dr. Ona Colasante, were convicted for treating patients with counterfeit cancer medication. 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 Florida lives at risk of serious injury or death.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



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

Based on reported investigations.

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

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Made with Fentanyl

- July 2018:** Vero Beach doctor Johnny Benjamin, Jr. sentenced to life in prison for manufacturing a counterfeit oxycodone pill containing fentanyl that killed the 34-year-old Wellington woman who took it.¹
- October 2017:** South Florida couple indicted as part of a massive fentanyl pill ring spanning two continents. The fentanyl came from China and Canada and was distributed to eleven states across the U.S.²
- August 2017:** Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department released a public alert about fake oxycodone made with fentanyl being sold in the area.³
- November 2016:** An Osceola County woman was killed by a counterfeit oxycodone made with fentanyl that her estranged boyfriend produced in his garage.⁴
- May 2016:** Pinellas County Medical Examiner's Office reported an increase in counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl, in particular fake Xanax pills.⁵
- April 2016:** Fentanyl-laced pills were seized in Osceola and Brevard Counties. These pills caused at least one fatality in the area.⁶
- March 2016:** Counterfeit Xanax laced with fentanyl killed nine people in Pinellas County. The sheriff urged people to avoid buying Xanax on the street.⁷

Fentanyl and Law Enforcement Exposure

- October 2016:** Three Broward County police dogs were treated with naloxone after being exposed to fentanyl.⁸

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- August 2017:** Gainesville physician Dr. Ona Colasante was sentenced to prison for treating her patients with black market cancer drugs.⁹
- November 2016:** Palm Harbor oncologist Dr. D. Anda Norbergs was convicted for using injectable cancer treatments from unlicensed sources on her oncology patients.¹⁰
- April 2015:** The FDA sent letters to 14 Florida doctors and more than 270 nationwide warning them to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.¹¹
- September 2013:** Martin Paul Bean III of Boca Raton was sentenced to two years in prison for purchasing cancer medications from Pakistan, India, and Turkey, repackaging them, and selling them as FDA-approved medications to medical practices throughout the United States.¹²
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 doctors, 70 in Florida, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹³
- February–June 2012:** Eight Florida doctors were among the 136 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit Avastin or Alzuan from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.¹⁴

Misbranded/Counterfeit Botox and Other Beauty Treatments

- December 2017:** A Bradenton woman was arrested for allegedly injecting clients with counterfeit Botox at clinic operating illegally out of her home.¹⁵
- May 2017:** Sanford resident Deanna Roberts was sentenced to 11 years in prison for injecting clients with illegally obtained, liquid silicone. She continued to inject clients even after learning of the death of one person and the hospitalization of others.¹⁶
- March 2017:** Tanisha Cassadine of Tampa died 24 hours after being given illegal silicone injections for body enhancement.¹⁷

- March 2017:** Oneal Morris, who had no medical license, was sentenced to 10 years in prison after she caused the death of a 31-year-old Miami woman in 2012 by illegally injecting silicone into her body.¹⁸
- May 2016:** Jose Robusto was arrested for causing the death of a client in June 2013 after he allegedly injected her with an unknown substance while performing a beauty treatment.¹⁹
- March 2015:** 158 Florida 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. 10 Florida doctors had to be warned a second time for buying from TC Medical.²⁰
- July 2013:** The FDA warned 21 doctors and medical practices in Florida to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.²¹
- November 2012:** 40 Florida 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.²²

Other Drugs/Medical Devices

- February 2018:** Three Chipley residents were sentenced for their involvement in a steroid and counterfeit prescription drug lab that operated in northwest Florida.²³
- April 2016:** A Bradenton resident was sentenced for operating a business that sold and distributed illegally smuggled prescription drugs to customers in the U.S.²⁴
- August 2014:** Family members living in Florida, Canada and India were charged with running a multi-million dollar fake online pharmacy business. They had more than 400,000 customers worldwide.²⁵
- September 2012:** Three Florida doctors were among the 23 U.S. doctors that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of the osteoporosis injectable medications Prolia and Aclasta from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs.com subsidiary.²⁶

Footnotes

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14. "Re: Unapproved Versions of Injectable Cancer Medications Could Result in Serious Harm to Your Patients; One Counterfeit Version Found," Letter from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, February 10, 2012, <http://bit.ly/2BCguVN> and "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
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