

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in New Jersey

June 2017, Carney Point Township: Two men arrested for manufacturing counterfeit fentanyl pills

November 2017, Monmouth County: Prosecutors announced finding counterfeit pills made with fentanyl for the third time that year

June 2018, Cherry Hill: Mother and son indicted for selling fake fentanyl pills

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.

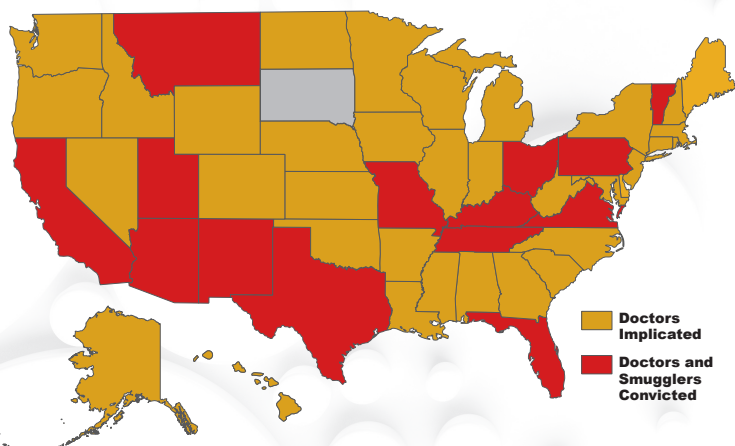
Fentanyl is a serious threat to New Jersey. In June 2017, State Police and members of the North Bergen Police Department arrested two men as they did a drug deal in a North Bergen parking lot. 40 kilograms of fentanyl was involved, which is enough to kill every man, woman, and child in the state. In December 2017, a resident of California was charged with shipping at least 500,000 counterfeit fentanyl pills into New Jersey.

130 New Jersey Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

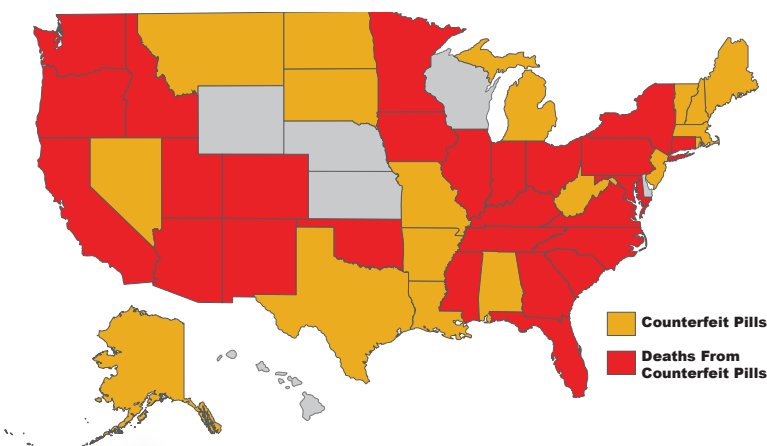
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched New Jersey as well. 130 different medical practices in New Jersey have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved 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 New Jersey lives at risk of serious injury or death.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in New Jersey (2011–2018)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of New Jersey residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Made with Fentanyl

- June 2018:** An indictment was handed down against a Rhode Island man, who prosecutors assert was a key figure in a major international fentanyl pill ring. Investigators believe he was responsible for selling the fentanyl that killed a Ramsey resident on or around February 23, 2014.¹
- June 2018:** Police arrested a mother and son from Cherry Hill for allegedly distributing drugs, including counterfeit pills made with fentanyl.²
- December 2017:** Two California men were indicted for their roles in a large-scale drug distribution ring that allegedly shipped at least 500,000 fentanyl pills into New Jersey.³ Prosecution has moved forward against one of them.⁴
- November 2017:** The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office confirmed that counterfeit pills made with fentanyl had been found in Neptune, Holmdel, and Long Beach in 2017.⁵
- June 2017:** Federal agents arrested two in Carneys Point Township suspected of using a home to manufacture counterfeit fentanyl pills.⁶
- June 2017:** State Police detectives and members of the North Bergen Police Department arrested Jesus Carrillo-Pineda and Daniel Vasquez after the men transferred 40 kilograms of fentanyl from one vehicle to another. Both men pleaded guilty in December 2017. Carrillo-Pineda received a ten-year sentence and Vasquez received a six-year sentence.⁷

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- February 2017:** A Monmouth oncology practice, doctor, and practice manager agreed to pay \$1.7 million to settle charges of illegally importing non-FDA approved medications and using them on their patients.⁸
- April 2015:** The FDA warned eight New Jersey medical practices and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.⁹
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, 42 in New Jersey, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹⁰
- February–June 2012:** Six New Jersey 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.¹¹

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned 57 New Jersey 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.¹²
- August 2015:** Three residents of New Jersey and former employees of TC Medical—sales representatives Asaf Akiva Ibrahimian and Reuven David Mirlis, and drop shipper Rivka Rabi—received two years probation for their involvement in distributing non-FDA approved medications. Each of the defendants had to pay a \$5,000 fine. Ibrahimian had an additional forfeiture of \$173,469.¹³
- July 2013:** The FDA warned four doctors and medical practices in New Jersey to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.¹⁴
- November 2012:** 11 New Jersey doctors were among the 350 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of Botox from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.¹⁵

Other Drugs

- April 2018:** A Patterson police officer was indicted for selling various illicit drugs, including counterfeit Percocet pills made with heroin.¹⁶
- February 2018:** A Pennsylvania couple was indicted after they sold tens of thousands of counterfeit oxycodone pills to an undercover agent in Patterson. The pills contained tramadol and heroin.¹⁷
- September 2014:** New Jersey company Natural Health Solutions received a warning letter from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for making fraudulent claims that some of their products could cure Ebola.¹⁸
- September 2012:** Two New Jersey 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.¹⁹
- May 2011:** Closter couple Harshad and Nita Patel pleaded guilty to selling counterfeit prescription drugs sourced from India to customers in the United States.²⁰ Both received a sentence of two years probation, with Nita also receiving nine months home confinement.²¹

Footnotes

1. Superseding Indictment, U.S. District Court, District of North Dakota, Case No. 3:18-cr-00054-DLH, <http://bit.ly/2DvLzIm>; Criminal Complaint, U.S. District Court, District of North Dakota, Case No. 3:18-cr-00054-DLH, <http://bit.ly/2Oubxci>.
2. Phaedra Trethan, "Cherry Hill Woman, Son Charged with Distribution of Heroin, Fentanyl," *Courier Post*, June 5, 2018, <https://on.cpsj.com/2Nzouly>.
3. "Two California Men Charged in Large-Scale Opioid Distribution Ring," U.S. Department of Justice, December 20, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2DsXXBy>.
4. Order for Dismissal, U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, Case No. 2:17-mj-04186-MAH, <http://bit.ly/2OQVkl8>.
5. Susanne Cervenka, "Fentanyl-laced Pills Found in Monmouth County for a Third Time, Prosecutor Says," *App.com*, November 22, 2018, <https://on.app.com/2zLVnH>.
6. Bill Gallo, Jr., "Fentanyl Pill Operation Busted at South Jersey Home, DEA Says," *NJ.com*, June 28, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2xCC9oP>.
7. "Two Men Sentenced to Prison in Connection with Largest Seizure of Super-Potent Opioid Fentanyl in New Jersey History," Office of the Attorney General, The State of New Jersey, January 26, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2xSmolO>.
8. "Oncology Practice, Doctor and Practice Manager Pay \$1.7 Million to Resolve Allegations They Billed Medicare for Illegally Imported Drugs," U.S. Department of Justice, February 16, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2ldOoqh>.
9. "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>.
10. "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>.
11. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
12. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...", <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
13. Second Amended Judgment, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Case No. 1:14-cr-00397-AJT, <http://bit.ly/2Q6BsDQ>; Judgment in a Criminal Case, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Case No. 1:14-cr-00397-AJT, <http://bit.ly/2O9BaPq>; Judgment in a Criminal Case, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Case No. 1:15-cr-00126-AJT, <http://bit.ly/2NtTPIm>.
14. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
15. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
16. "Paterson Police Officer Charged with Distributing Narcotics," U.S. Department of Justice, April 20, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2DGlgqL>.
17. "Pennsylvania Couple Charged with Distributing Fake Oxycodone Pills Containing Heroin," U.S. Department of Justice, February 8, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2QYcLuw>.
18. "Warning Letter," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, September 23, 2014, <http://bit.ly/2OUaWxD>.
19. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
20. "Closter, New Jersey Couple Pleads Guilty to Selling Counterfeit Prescription Drugs Manufactured in India," The Federal Bureau of Investigation, May 16, 2011, <http://bit.ly/2QXyflo>.
21. Sentencing Hearing, U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, Case No. 1:11-cr-00327-JEI, <http://bit.ly/2leAYJ6> and Sentencing Hearing, U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, Case No. 1:11-cr-00326-JEI, <http://bit.ly/2QXwKJW>.