

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Rhode Island

June 2018, Pawtucket:
Resident arrested for his role in a major counterfeit fentanyl pill drug trafficking ring

October 2017, Providence: Police bust a major drug ring and seized 23 kilograms of fentanyl

July 2017, East Providence: Man arrested with 325 fake fentanyl pills on his person

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.

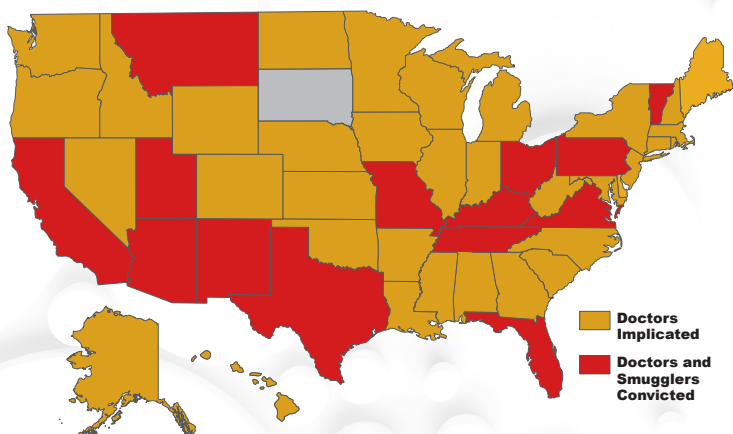
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Rhode Island. **The 23 kilograms of fentanyl seized in Providence in October 2017 was enough to make over 7.6 million fatal doses—enough to kill every Rhode Island resident seven times.** Prosecutors allege that a Pawtucket resident indicted in June 2018 manufactured up to 40,000 counterfeit fentanyl pills at a time.

Six Rhode Island Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

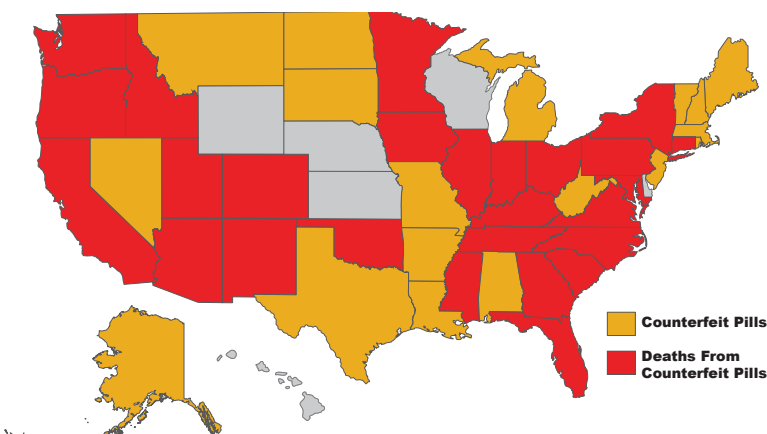
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Rhode Island as well. Six different medical practices in Rhode Island have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their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

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in Rhode Island (2010–2018)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of Rhode Island residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- August 2018:** A man in Woonsocket was poisoned after taking two Percocets pills that police believed were actually counterfeits made with fentanyl.¹
- June 2018:** Pawtucket resident indicted for his role in a major fentanyl pill manufacturing ring. Prosecutors alleged that he manufactured up to 40,000 fake fentanyl pills at a time between 2015 and 2017.²
- June 2018:** Police in Providence arrested three men found in possession of four kilograms of fentanyl.³
- April 2018:** A search of a residence in Pawtucket led to the seizure of multiple drugs, including approximately 550 counterfeit pills made with fentanyl.⁴
- October 2017:** Law enforcement disrupted a major fentanyl and cocaine trafficking ring, seizing 23 kilograms of fentanyl in the process. The leader of the ring, Ramon Delossantos, pleaded guilty in June 2018.⁵
- July 2017:** An East Providence man was identified as a “large-scale distributor of fentanyl-laced pills.” When he was arrested, police found 325 fentanyl pills on him.⁶

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- June 2016:** A Cranston businessman pleaded guilty to charges that he and his company, Lifescreen LLC, sold pharmaceuticals purchased from India and other countries as FDA-approved medication. Diwan purchased the drugs abroad, then repackaged and forged labels for them in Rhode Island.⁷
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including three doctors’ offices in Rhode Island, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁸

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned three Rhode Island 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.⁹

Other Counterfeit Drugs and Medical Devices

- April 2013:** Rhode Island pair pleaded guilty to being part of an international criminal enterprise based in Israel that imported steroids and misbranded pharmaceuticals into the United States for sale via the Internet.¹⁰
- February 2011:** Rhode Island resident Anny L. Puello pleaded guilty to illegally smuggling erectile dysfunction drugs into the country from the People’s Republic of China and selling them, falsely labeled as herbal supplements.¹¹
- June 2010:** The Department of Health announced an investigation of 28 providers in 10 Rhode Island OB-GYN medical offices who had illegally imported non-FDA approved IUDs and inserted them into patients.¹²

Footnotes

1. "Man in Viral Overdose Photo Shoot Speaks Out," *KMOV* 4, August 9, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2IxiRth>.
2. April Baumgarten, "Rhode Island Man Manufactured Tens of Thousands of Fentanyl Pills, Prosecutors Say," *Grand Forks Herald*, June 29, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2QsZ323>.
3. Amanda Milkovits, "3 Charged, \$1M Worth of Fentanyl Seized in Drug-trafficking Bust in Providence," *Providence Journal*, June 26, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2DNQs8t>.
4. Carl Sisson, "Fentanyl, Cocaine Seized During Pawtucket Drug Bust," *WPRI* 12, April 19, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2Os9XYp>.
5. Katie Mulvaney, "Feds Announce Dismantling of Fentanyl and Cocaine Ring Based in R.I.," *Providence Journal*, October 30, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2xSdYMo>; Katie Mulvaney, "Man Described as Kingpin of Cocaine, Fentanyl Ring Pleads Guilty to Drug Charges," *Providence Journal*, June 14, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2xSpffv>.
6. "Police Arrest East Providence Man, Seize Fentanyl, Cocaine," *Providence Journal*, July 26, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2IweaVE>.
7. "R.I. Businessman Pleads Guilty to Running International Scheme to Label and Sell Misbranded Drugs," U.S. Department of Justice, June 20, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2IuQzEv>.
8. "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>.
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. "Two Plead Guilty to Participation in International Conspiracy to Import and Distribute Prescription Drugs and Anabolic Steroids," U.S. Department of Justice, March 13, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2Qp7VFH>.
11. "Guilty Plea in Smuggled ED Drugs Scam," *Drug Topics*, February 15, 2011, <http://bit.ly/2zK5OqD>.
12. Michelle Sullivan, "FDA and R.I. Investigate Unapproved IUD Use," *OB Gyn News*, September 1, 2018, as cached at <http://bit.ly/2Ocsuq>.