THE DEADLY COUNTERFEIT DRUG TRADE THRIVES IN FLORIDA

Counterfeit pills, intravenous and injectable medications have injured and even killed, Florida patients.

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Counterfeit pharmaceuticals have plagued the state of Florida for many years.

At the beginning of the 21st century, wholesalers inside the state or that did business within the state took advantage of lax enforcement to allow counterfeit, diverted, and adulterated drugs into the secure supply chain. According to the First Interim Report from the state’s Seventeenth Statewide Grand Jury, many wholesalers in Florida’s market were “unqualified, inexperienced, irresponsible and incompetent to properly handle, store or deal in pharmaceuticals.”

Unregulated prescription drugs—counterfeit Avastin, fake Botox, and black-market osteoporosis treatments, among others—have also touched Florida. Between 2012 and 2016, 325 different medical practices in Florida were among more than 3,000 nationwide that were implicated in various black-market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families of patients like Wanda Colgan, whose Palm Harbor oncologist treated her with misbranded, non-FDA-approved medicine sourced from unlicensed foreign suppliers, will never be sure whether their loved one’s lives were cut short by fake medicines smuggled into the country by profiteers.

Although the state adopted a stricter system to track legitimate medicines, counterfeit drug smugglers continue to infiltrate the illicit opioid market and prescription drug supply to the detriment of Florida’s residents. Since 2015, Florida has seen a terrible upsurge in counterfeit prescription pills laced with fentanyl or its deadlier variants. In October 2019, a former resident of Seminole received a 30-year prison sentence for operating a large-scale fentanyl pill manufacturing operation that put hundreds of thousands of counterfeit oxycodone pills for sale on the street. The Pinellas County sheriff warned residents not to purchase Xanax on the street after nine people died in March 2016. Additional deaths attributed to counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl have been reported in Dunedin, Jacksonville, Kissimmee, Lantana, Osceola County, and Wellington. Many more Florida residents have likely died of fentanyl poisoning after encountering these pills, but not all pill deaths are investigated for counterfeit drugs, and not all families publicly share their losses.

Fake pills look so real that families across the state may never know what actually killed their loved ones. The only way to protect Americans from these dangers is to preserve and strengthen the closed U.S. supply chain, which holds all participants in the production and sale of medicines accountable for safety regulations.

To see a list of counterfeit drug incidents in Florida between 2010 and 2018, please consult our 2018 Infosheet.
**FENTANYL PILL SEIZURES**


**REPORTED FENTANYL PILL DEATHS**


**FORT LAUDERDALE:** Ronnie Koenig, “Below Deck’ Star Captain Lee Rosbach Opens Up About Son’s Accidental Overdose,” October 13, 2019, [https://on.today.com/2XaQHQR](https://on.today.com/2XaQHQR).


**KISSIMMEE:** Joseph Rhee, Victor Ordonez, and Gerry Wagschal, “Following the Drug Fentanyl’s...,” [https://abcn.ws/2NPEoVX](https://abcn.ws/2NPEoVX).


**OSCEOLA COUNTY:** “9 Investigates Dangerous ‘Kill Pills’...,” [http://at.wftv.com/2DZNfYM](http://at.wftv.com/2DZNfYM) and “Obituary Pruitt Jacob Wright...,” [http://at.wftv.com/2DZNfYM](http://at.wftv.com/2DZNfYM).

**PINELLAS COUNTY:** Natasha Noman, “Fentanyl is Being Sold as Xanax in Florida...,” [http://bit.ly/2E0wdDg](http://bit.ly/2E0wdDg).


**PILL PRESS SEIZURES**

**BLACK MARKET CANCER MEDICATION WARNINGS**


**CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS**


COUNTERFEIT BOTOX WARNINGS

FDA WARNING LETTERS


Altamonte Springs, Bal Harbour, Bay Harbor Islands, Boca Raton, Bonita Springs, Bradenton, Brandon, Clearwater, Coconut Creek, Coral Gables, Coral Springs, Crystal River, Delray Beach, Destin, Doral, Dundee, Edgewater, Estero, Fort Lauderdale, Fort Walton Beach, Fort Myers, Fort Pierce, Gainesville, Gulf Breeze, Haines City, Hallandale, Hialeah, Hollywood, Inverness, Islamorada, Jacksonville, Jupiter, Key Biscayne, Kissimmee, Lake Worth, Lakeland, Largo, Lithia, Lutz, Marathon, Marco Island, Margate, Melbourne, Melbourne Beach, Merritt Island, Miami, Miami Beach, Miramar Beach, North Fort Myers, Naples, Navarre, New Port Richey, Niceville, North Miami, North Miami Beach, Ocala, Orlando, Ormond Beach, Palm Beach Gardens, Panama City, Panama City Beach, Pembroke Pines, Plantation, Pompano Beach, Port Charlotte, Port Orange, Port Richey, Sarasota, Sebring, Seminole, South Miami, Sunrise, Tallahassee, Tampa, Titusville, Trinity, Venice, Vero Beach, West Palm Beach, Winter Haven

CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS


DEATHS CAUSED BY FAKE BEAUTY TREATMENTS


WEST MIAMI: David Ovalle, “Police Arrest Man Accused of Performing ...,” http://hrld.us/2GwUtAc.


Criminal Prosecutions

Deaths Caused by Fake Beauty Treatments