

# THE DEADLY COUNTERFEIT DRUG TRADE THRIVES IN MARYLAND

**2012–2013: The FDA warned ten Maryland doctors offices to stop buying from foreign suppliers that had sold counterfeit cancer medication.**

**November 2018, Reisterstown: A man received a 57-month sentence and forfeited more than \$5.5mm for making and selling almost a million fake Xanax pills.**

**August 2019, Germantown: A resident died of fentanyl poisoning after taking what she thought was a Percocet for a toothache.**

## THE COUNTRY HAS SEEN AN UPSURGE IN COUNTERFEIT PRESCRIPTION PILLS MASQUERADING AS PAINKILLERS AND XANAX.

These pills are disguised as real medications but are 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.

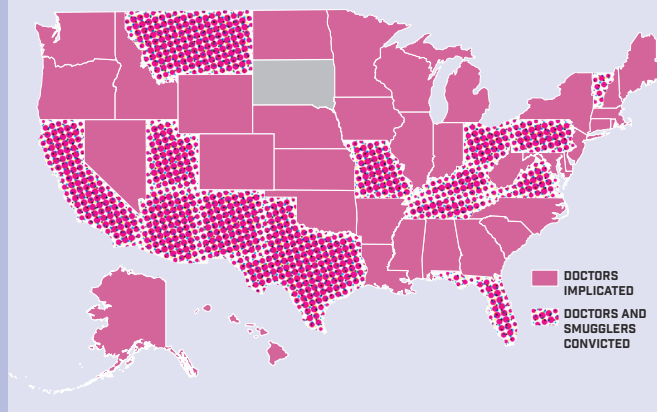
Fentanyl is a serious threat in Maryland. Fentanyl-related deaths statewide climbed from 58 in 2013 to 1,888 in 2018. Counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl were first reported in Carroll County in April 2016, and have since been found in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, and Montgomery Counties.

## 40 MARYLAND DOCTORS LINKED TO FAKE DRUG RINGS

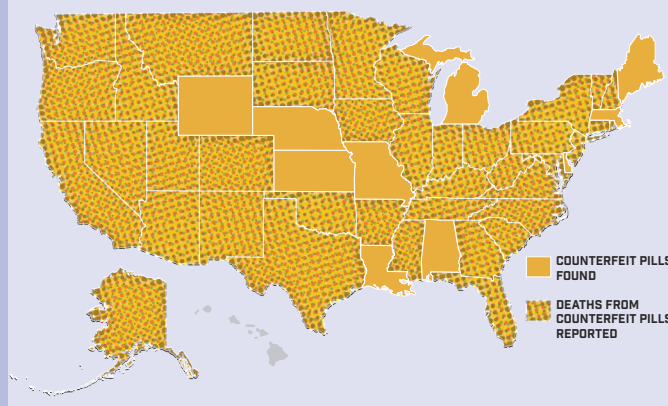
Counterfeit cancer drugs also threaten Maryland. 40 different medical practices in Maryland have been implicated in black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or fake, and if they died from a lack of treatment.

## OPENING THE U.S.'S CLOSED DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN PUTS MARYLAND LIVES AT RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.

**Fake Cancer Drug Crisis**



**Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths**



# COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INVESTIGATIONS IN MARYLAND (2012–2019)



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

NOTE THAT EACH INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE AFFECTED HUNDREDS OF MARYLAND RESIDENTS.

## COUNTERFEIT PILLS CONTAINING FENTANYL

- November 2019:** Baltimore resident Earl Joseph Morris III pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute fentanyl. Baltimore County Police seized more than 1,859 fentanyl-laced pills from Morris' vehicle in December 2018.<sup>1</sup>
- August 2019:** 46-year-old Germantown resident Theresa McIntire died of fentanyl poisoning after she took what she thought was a Percocet for a toothache.<sup>2</sup>
- March 2019:** Robert Luke Simpson of Gambrills received a 57-month sentence for selling counterfeit, fentanyl-laced pills that he had purchased online. Law enforcement seized 6,200 fentanyl pills hidden in his home in October 2017.<sup>3</sup>
- October 2018:** Baltimore Police searched a residence and found 5 grams of a heroin-fentanyl mixture and drug paraphernalia, including a pill press with residue.<sup>4</sup>
- June 2017:** The Anne Arundel County Office of the Chief Medical Examiner announced that fentanyl was responsible for at least 47 of 56 drug overdose deaths in the first six months of 2017.<sup>5</sup> By December 2017, the number of fatal fentanyl poisonings had climbed to at least 97.<sup>6</sup>
- June 2017:** The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announced that the number of fentanyl-related deaths more than tripled, from 340 to 1,119, between 2015 and 2016.<sup>7</sup> By the end of 2018, that number would climb to 1,888.<sup>8</sup>
- May 2017:** Maryland State Police warned that counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl had been found in Anne Arundel County.<sup>9</sup>
- March 2017:** Agents with the Cecil County Drug Task Force confiscated 127 counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl pills in a residence near Port Deposit.<sup>10</sup>
- April 2016:** The Carroll County Health Department warned that local residents had died after taking fentanyl-laced counterfeit pain and anxiety medications being sold on the street.<sup>11</sup>

## BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- April 2015:** The FDA warned three Maryland medical practices and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.<sup>12</sup>
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, nine in Maryland, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>13</sup>
- 2012–2013** The FDA warned ten Maryland doctors offices and more than 500 across the country to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.<sup>14</sup>

## MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

- March 2016:** The FDA warned 16 Maryland 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.<sup>15</sup>
- July 2013:** The FDA warned two medical practices in Maryland to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.<sup>16</sup>

## OTHER DRUGS

- November 2018:** Ryan Farace of Reisterstown received a 57-month sentence and a money judgment equal to \$5,665,000 and 4,000 Bitcoin for manufacturing and selling 920,000 counterfeit alprazolam pills online.<sup>17</sup>
- September 2017:** Randallstown resident Kendra Westmoreland was sentenced to two years in prison for posing as a licensed medical practitioner and illegally injecting clients with what she claimed was “medical grade” silicone.<sup>18</sup>
- July 2015:** University of Maryland’s Baltimore Washington Medical Center notified 250 spinal fusion patients that they may have received counterfeit hardware manufactured by a California-based company, Spinal Solutions, LLC.<sup>19</sup>
- May 2015:** Pharmacy owner and Reisterstown resident Salim Yusuf was sentenced to 12 months home confinement as part of his four years probation and a \$200,000 forfeiture for trafficking contraband cigarettes, health care fraud, and providing his customers with unapproved prescription drugs from Germany and Eastern Europe.<sup>20</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

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14. “Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased Counterfeit...,” <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
15. “FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...,” <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
16. “Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...,” <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
17. “Maryland Man Sentenced to 57 Months in Federal Prison and Ordered to Forfeit at Least \$5.665 Million as a Result of His Conviction on Charges Relating to Dark Web Drug Distribution and Money Laundering,” U.S. Department of Justice, November 30, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2QrH5iE>.
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19. Meredith Cohn, “Local Hospital, Doctor Named in Lawsuit Over Fake Surgical Hardware,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 16, 2015, <http://bsun.md/2G3owab>.
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