8 Maine doctors linked to fake drug rings

Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Maine as well. 8 different medical practices in Maine 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.

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 Mainers. In October 2018, the Surry Police Department reported finding 91 fentanyl pills during a drug bust. In 2017, 418 people died from drug overdoses, a record. There was a 27% increase in deaths from the previous year blamed specifically on illegal fentanyl and fentanyl analogues. In 2018, fatalities went down to a projected 307 deaths, however illicit fentanyl figured in 61% of those deaths.

Drug traffickers put fentanyl or one of its analogues into the fake pills they make using pill presses and sell them to unsuspecting people on the street.
COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INVESTIGATIONS IN MAIN (2012–2019)

BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.
NOTE THAT EACH INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE AFFECTED HUNDREDS OF MAINE RESIDENTS.

FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

September 2019: A 33-year-old woman was charged with child endangerment after an infant in her care died of fentanyl poisoning in October 2018.¹

August 2019: James Cox of Edmund Township received an 18-month sentence and three years of probation for the sale of counterfeit oxycodone and Percocet. He sold Maine Drug Enforcement Agency agents fentanyl-laced pills in October 2017 and February 2018.²

February 2018: Maine reported a 27 percent increase in deaths due to illegal fentanyl and fentanyl analogues in 2017.³

February 2018: Police charged a Surry man with trafficking after police discovered 91 pressed fentanyl pills in his room.⁴

October 2017: Michael Goyette, of Lewiston was arrested at Knox County Regional Airport for the possession of over 100 counterfeit oxycodone pills that were made with fentanyl.⁵ Goyette received a three-year sentence with all but six months suspended and three years of probation in 2018.⁶

November 2016: A Utah-based drug counterfeiting operation shipped to buyers in Maine fentanyl-laced counterfeit oxycodone pills.⁷

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

May 2013: The FDA warned 780 doctors, one in Maine, 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 2015: Six Maine doctors were among more than 1,200 nationwide who 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.⁹

November 2012: One Maine doctor was 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.¹⁰

OTHER COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

August 2018: 23-year-old Portland man named Colin Harle was arrested after attempting to sell counterfeit Xanax.¹¹ The subsequent search of a safe belonging to Harle uncovered 20,000 counterfeit Xanax pills. On July 16, 2019, Harle pleaded guilty to selling counterfeit drugs, possession of a firearm, and furtherance of drug trafficking.¹²

July 2018: Quantum Solutions, SRL, the parent company of a Canadian online pharmacy that marketed pharmaceuticals to Mainers as Canada Drug Center¹³ during Maine’s brief legalization of drug importation, agreed to pay a $150,000 fine and forfeit more than $4 million for selling misbranded drugs to Americans.¹⁴

November 2013: Maine Board of Pharmacy President, Dr. Kenneth McCall saw ads for an online pharmacy called Canada Drug Center, so ordered medication to test it for genuineness. Instead of genuine drugs from Canada, he received drugs from India, Turkey, and Mauritius. The active ingredients in the drugs were not sufficient, ranging from 58% to 77% of the stated dosage, and one contained an unknown contaminant.¹⁵ Parallel testing by WGME News found similar results.¹⁶


