

# THE DEADLY COUNTERFEIT DRUG TRADE THRIVES IN NEW YORK

**May 2013: The FDA warned 71 New York doctors to stop doing business with an unlicensed distributor who had sold counterfeit cancer medicine.**

**New York City, 2013-2018: 5 women died after receiving illegal cosmetic injections that contained silicone.**

**Elmira, February 2019: A man received a 23-year sentence for manufacturing and selling fentanyl-laced pills that led to at least two deaths.**

## 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.

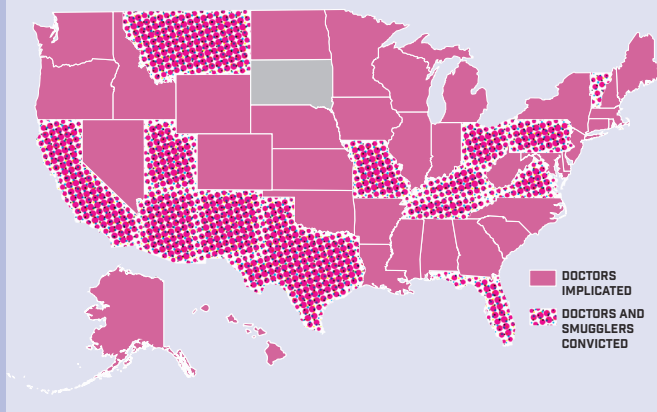
Fentanyl is a serious threat to New York. In July 2017, police in West Babylon arrested two men as they were making counterfeit pills with fentanyl in the garage of a home across the street from a junior high school. Fentanyl pill trafficking rings have been busted in Buffalo, Elmira, New York City, and Wyandanch, and in Orange and Rockland counties. Authorities have reported fentanyl pill deaths in Chatham, Elmira, and Montauk.

## 200 NEW YORK DOCTORS LINKED TO FAKE DRUG RINGS

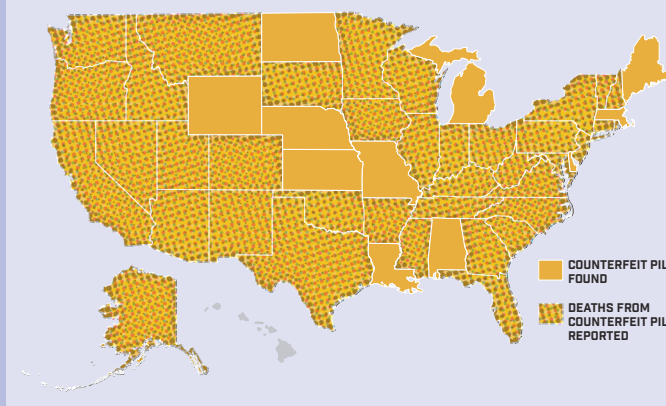
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched New York as well. 200 different medical practices in New York have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones 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 YORK 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 YORK (2012–2019)



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

NOTE THAT EACH INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE AFFECTED HUNDREDS OF NEW YORK RESIDENTS.

## FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- April 2019:** Ismail Latif of Wyandanch pleaded guilty to operating a ring that distributed counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl.<sup>1</sup>
- February 2019:** In Manhattan and the Bronx, authorities arrested four and seized 20,000 counterfeit oxycodone pills suspected of containing fentanyl and heroin.<sup>2</sup>
- February 2019:** Law enforcement arrested more than 20 people in Orange and Rockland counties for their alleged participation in a cocaine and fentanyl pill distribution ring.<sup>3</sup>
- February 2019:** Robert Ian Thatcher of Elmira received a 23-year sentence for leading a drug trafficking organization that manufactured and sold fentanyl-laced pills online and around the Elmira area, resulting in at least two deaths. 13 other members of the scheme had already been convicted of federal charges.<sup>4</sup>
- September 2018:** Police arrested three men after uncovering a counterfeit oxycodone pill-manufacturing operation in a vacant apartment and the boiler room of a Bronx apartment building.<sup>5</sup>
- February 2018:** A vehicle search in New York City turned up four kilograms of fentanyl hidden in a cooler of fish fillets and chili.<sup>6</sup>
- December 2017:** Johnnie Monroe and Edward Carrillo of Brooklyn were sentenced to eight and ten-and-a-half-years, respectively, for dealing fentanyl pills. Their products killed a woman in West Virginia.<sup>7</sup>
- October 2017:** Two brothers in Flushing were arrested for allegedly selling 62,000 Xanax pills, some of which contained fentanyl. The New York Police Department found their stash—an additional 10,000 pills—in a storage facility in New Hampton.<sup>8</sup>
- September 2017:** A 26-year-old Chatham restaurant manager died after taking fentanyl-laced pills.<sup>9</sup>
- September 2017:** Police intercepted 500 counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl bound for an address in Buffalo, which led to the November 2017 indictment of nine Buffalo residents and a supplier from California for selling fentanyl-laced pills and other illicit drugs.<sup>10</sup>
- August–September 2017:** A pair of busts netted almost 195 pounds of fentanyl. Police said this was enough to make 32 million fatal doses.<sup>11</sup>
- July 2017:** Police arrested two men in West Babylon while they were making counterfeit pills that contained fentanyl in a garage located across the street from a junior high school.<sup>12</sup>
- August 2016:** A 23-year-old Eastport man died in Montauk after taking a counterfeit fentanyl-laced oxycodone.<sup>13</sup>
- March 2016:** Police in Elmira launched an investigation about the overdose death of an individual who had been distributing counterfeit pills that contained Xanax, oxycodone, and fentanyl.<sup>14</sup>

## BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- February 2018:** A Queensbury cancer doctor and his wife/office manager agreed to pay \$500,000 after the doctor pleaded guilty to purchasing and using illegally imported unapproved chemotherapy drugs on patients.<sup>15</sup>
- April 2015:** The FDA sent warning letters to 26 New York doctors and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.<sup>16</sup>
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including 71 doctors offices in New York, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>17</sup>
- February–June 2012:** Seven New York doctors were among the 136 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit Avastin or Altzuan from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.<sup>18</sup>

## MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT COSMETIC INJECTABLES

- June 2018:** A Philadelphia resident died of silicone embolism syndrome in the Bronx after receiving illegal silicone injections.<sup>19</sup>
- April 2018:** Dr. Riyaz Hassanali of Williamsville and his wife/office manager each received a year's probation for charges related to purchasing and treating patients with an illegally imported version of Dysport between 2009 and 2011. His wife committed tax fraud.<sup>20</sup>
- July 2017:** A Harlem mother was rushed to an emergency room after illegal silicone injections left her feeling dizzy and complaining of chest pains. Doctors declared her brain-dead and she was removed from life support two weeks later.<sup>21</sup>
- March 2016:** 68 doctors offices and practices in New York were among more than 1,227 doctors nationwide who received warning letters from the FDA to stop buying infusion drugs from TC Medical Group, which sold more than \$33 million worth of non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Botox.<sup>22</sup>
- August 2015:** A Bronx woman died after she received illegal silicone injections. The medical examiner said the cause of death was an embolism caused by the cosmetic silicone injections.<sup>23</sup>
- May 2015:** A Maryland resident died in Queens after eBay-sourced silicone injections she received entered her bloodstream. The British woman who administered the treatment was extradited from the U.K. on the condition that she would spend no more than a year in prison. She pleaded guilty to homicide on October 18, 2019.<sup>24</sup>
- July 2013:** A 24-year-old college student from Jamaica Queens died after silicone injections entered her bloodstream, causing embolisms that asphyxiated her.<sup>25</sup>
- July 2013:** The FDA warned nine doctors and medical practices in New York to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.<sup>26</sup>
- November 2012:** 19 New York 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.<sup>27</sup>

## OTHER TREATMENTS

- September 2019:** Eight people were arrested for allegedly importing millions of opioid pills and other drugs from India, repackaging them in a Queens warehouse, and mailing them to customers across the U.S.<sup>28</sup>
- April 2019:** The Manhattan District Attorney's Office indicted three New Jersey residents for manufacturing and selling hundreds of thousands of counterfeit Xanax tablets and other controlled substances to buyers in 43 states and laundering over \$2 million in cryptocurrency using ATMs in Manhattan and New Jersey.<sup>29</sup>
- November 2018:** Rochester resident Samuel McFarland pleaded guilty to smuggling counterfeit Viagra and Cialis pills into the U.S.<sup>30</sup> McFarland was sentenced to 24 months probation in October 2019.<sup>31</sup>
- September 2018:** A Garden City ophthalmologist paid over \$6.9 to settle claims that he treated patients with medicines he illegally imported and fraudulently billed Medicare for them.<sup>32</sup>
- May 2018:** Department of Homeland Security agents searched three residences in Flushing and Mt. Sinai and found 12 kilograms of suspected Xanax pills, four pill presses, mixers, pill press parts, over a dozen kilograms of various powders, and packaging materials.<sup>33</sup>
- November 2017:** Alain Lamontagne of Middletown pleaded guilty to selling counterfeit horse drugs that he falsely claimed were manufactured in a legitimate pharmacy in Ontario.<sup>34</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

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