

Fake Painkillers Counterfeit Xanax Black Market Cancer Drugs and More...



DANGEROUS COUNTERFEIT MEDICINES ARE COMMONPLACE IN NEW YORK.

In 2019 and 2020, federal authorities shut down a fake pharmacy operation which sold Americans illegally imported prescription drugs. Customs and Border Protection intercepted fake Xanax and counterfeit Cialis pills at the Canadian border. Law enforcement at all levels continued to seize counterfeit prescription pills made with fentanyl, alprazolam and methamphetamine. They shut down manufacturing and distribution operations in Elmira, New York City, Port Jervis, Wyandanch, and in Orange and Rockland Counties. Press reports about fentanyl pill poisonings—one fatal—surfaced in Elmira, Manhattan and Staten Island, joining earlier reporting about deaths in Chatham and Montauk. Many deaths undoubtedly go unreported.

October 2020, Port Jervis: Law enforcement searched a home, seizing illicit drugs, prescription pills, a pill press, and stolen medical equipment.

April 2020, Champlain: CBP seized 27 commercial shipments of fake Xanax totalling 35 pounds.

September 2019, Queens: 8 people allegedly illegally imported millions of opioid pills and other drugs from India and mailed them to customers across the U.S.



COUNTERFEIT DRUGS HAVE ALSO PENETRATED NEW YORK'S MEDICAL PRACTICES.

Between 2012 and 2016, the FDA warned 96 of the state's doctors' offices to stop buying from unlicensed distributors selling counterfeit Botox. The agency warned another 104 doctors' offices to stop buying cancer treatments from distributors who had been caught selling counterfeit Avastin. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or whether they died from a lack of treatment.



New Yorkers should not have to worry about whether their medicine is safe, genuine or effective. Protect them by supporting and strengthening the closed U.S. drug supply chain.

COUNTERFEIT & BLACKMARKET DRUG INCIDENTS IN NEW YORK, 2012-2021



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- October 2020:** Law enforcement found fentanyl and other illicit drugs, prescription pills, a pill press, stolen medical equipment and other stolen property when they searched the home of a 25-year-old Port Jervis man.¹
- October 2020:** Authorities charged a man who allegedly sold counterfeit pills that caused two non-fatal fentanyl poisonings on Staten Island.²
- August 2020:** Customs and Border Protection officers in Louisville, Kentucky confiscated three pounds of fentanyl pills hidden in corsets which were being shipped from Mexico to a residence in New York.³
- May 2020:** Westchester County police arrested a Massachusetts man after officers found large quantities of illicit drugs, including counterfeit prescription pills, during a traffic stop in Yonkers.⁴
- November 2019:** A federal grand jury charged a 36-year-old Queens resident with selling the counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl that killed Rachel Spiteri, who was found dead in her Manhattan apartment in June 2019.⁵
- April 2019:** Ismail Latif of Wyandanch pleaded guilty to operating a ring that distributed counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl.⁶
- February 2019:** In Manhattan and the Bronx, authorities arrested four and seized 20,000 counterfeit oxycodone pills suspected of containing fentanyl and heroin.⁷
- 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.⁸ Many of the defendants, including two area firefighters⁹ and a Wallkill resident who supplied the counterfeit pills,¹⁰ pleaded guilty for their roles and were sentenced over the course of 2019.
- 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. Thirteen other members of the scheme had already been convicted of federal charges.¹¹
- 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.¹²
- 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.¹³
- 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.¹⁴
- September 2017:** A 26-year-old Chatham restaurant manager died after taking fentanyl-laced pills.¹⁵
- 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.¹⁶
- 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.¹⁷
- August 2016:** A 23-year-old Eastport man died in Montauk after taking a counterfeit fentanyl-laced oxycodone.¹⁸
- 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.¹⁹

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.²⁰

- 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.²¹
- 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.²²
- 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.²³

MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT COSMETIC INJECTABLES

- June 2018:** A Philadelphia resident died of silicone embolism syndrome in the Bronx after receiving illegal silicone injections.²⁴
- 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.²⁵
- 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.²⁶
- 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.²⁷
- 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.²⁸
- 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, 2019.²⁹
- July 2013:** A 24-year-old college student from Jamaica Queens died after silicone injections entered her bloodstream, causing embolisms that asphyxiated her.³⁰
- 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.³¹
- 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.³²

OTHER TREATMENTS

- January 2021:** Cincinnati CBP officers seized more than 10,000 Viagra pills in two shipments destined for Brooklyn. The bottles bore labels claiming that they were made in the U.S., but were being imported from the Middle East.³³
- September 2020:** CBP officers at the Champlain Port of Entry seized a shipment of counterfeit Cialis pills destined for the United States.³⁴
- August 2020:** Three New York residents pleaded guilty in federal court for processing payments for the sale of illegally imported prescription drugs from China, Russia, and India.³⁵
- June 2020:** DEA agents and the New York Police Department raided the basement of a residential building in the Bronx, and found dozens of chickens and roosters being bred for cockfighting, three industrial pill press machines, and illicit drugs, including 1,600 blue methamphetamine pills.³⁶
- April 2020:** CBP officers at the Champlain Port of Entry seized 27 commercial shipments of counterfeit Xanax totaling just over 35 pounds.³⁷
- 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.³⁸
- 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.²⁹
- November 2018:** Rochester resident Samuel McFarland pleaded guilty to smuggling counterfeit Viagra and Cialis pills into the U.S.³⁰ McFarland was sentenced to 24 months probation in October 2019.³¹

- 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.³²
- 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.³³
- 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.³⁴

FOOTNOTES

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