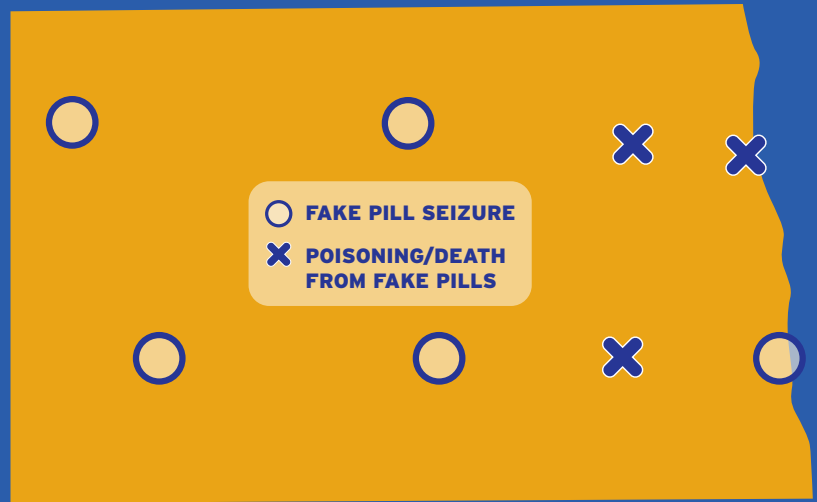


# Fake Medicine Is Taking Lives in the Roughrider State



## COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL HAVE TAKEN HOLD IN NORTH DAKOTA

The fentanyl pill crisis first came to North Dakota in 2017 but has exploded since June 2020. **Law enforcement agents have seized pills in Bismarck, Fargo, Minot, and Williston.** Police in **Dickinson issued public warnings** in December 2020 and February 2021 after seeing an increase in fentanyl poisonings and counterfeit pills being sold around town. North Dakota only made it 15 days into 2021 before **losing a Jamestown resident to a counterfeit oxycodone pill made with fentanyl**, and a **Grand Forks man died** as a result of the pills in March 2020. Authorities first reported fentanyl poisonings in and around **Devil's Lake** and in **Grand Forks** in 2017.



**February 2021, Bismarck:** Police arrested a man found in a hotel room with approximately 2,000 fentanyl pills.



**February 2021, Dickinson:** Police issued their second public warning in two months about fake fentanyl pills.



**January 2021, Jamestown:** A 36-year-old man died after ingesting a counterfeit oxycodone pill containing fentanyl.

## FAKE MEDICINE CAN BE FOUND IN LEGITIMATE PLACES



Street corners are not the only place you can find counterfeit medicine. It has been found in doctors' offices as well. Between 2012 and 2016, the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration sent warning letters** to over 3,000 doctors and clinics across the country warning them to stop purchasing medications from known **black market wholesalers**. **Ten of those warning letters went to doctors in North Dakota** and included **medicine to treat cancer, osteoporosis, migraines, and other serious medical conditions**.

**Protect North Dakotans by supporting and strengthening the U.S. secure drug supply chain.**

# COUNTERFEIT & BLACK MARKET DRUG INCIDENTS IN NORTH DAKOTA, 2012-2021

BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

## FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- February 2021:** Police charged a California man who allegedly sold counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl that killed a Jamestown resident in January.<sup>1</sup>
- February 2021:** The U.S. Attorney's Office announced charges against a Taylor, Michigan resident. Police arrested the man in a Bismarck hotel room in possession of approximately 2,000 counterfeit oxycodone pills that contained fentanyl.<sup>2</sup>
- February 2021:** Agents with the Narcotics Task Force in Bismarck reported seizing over 4,000 fentanyl pills made to resemble legitimate pharmaceutical pills in the last six months.<sup>3</sup>
- February 2021:** The Dickinson Police Department warned the public about an increase in drugs being trafficked in the city. The warning specifically mentioned counterfeit oxycodone pills that have been linked to multiple overdoses.<sup>4</sup>
- January 2021:** Bismarck police arrested a 39-year-old man in a local motel who police say was in possession of 231 counterfeit oxycodone pills.<sup>5</sup>
- January 2021:** The U.S. District Court of North Dakota extradited two Montreal, Canada residents to face charges for their alleged participation in a drug trafficking ring operated by Daniel Vivas Ceron (see July 2019 incident).<sup>6</sup>
- December 2020:** Police in Dickinson issued a public warning after linking four near-fatal poisonings to counterfeit pills containing fentanyl.<sup>7</sup>
- December 2020:** Minot police seized multiple oxycodone pills that they suspected of being counterfeits containing fentanyl while searching a home.<sup>8</sup>
- November 2020:** Bismarck police arrested and charged three people after a search turned up almost 4,000 pills made to look like oxycodone, but actually contained fentanyl.<sup>9</sup>
- October 2020:** Federal authorities indicted multiple individuals for their alleged roles in the sale of counterfeit fentanyl pills to a juvenile who suffered a non-fatal poisoning on August 2, 2020.<sup>10</sup>
- September 2020:** Police seized 1,400 fentanyl pills while executing three search warrants in Fargo. Multiple people were expected to face state or federal charges.<sup>11</sup>
- September 2020:** A 25-year-old man was indicted in Ward County after Minot police allegedly found him in possession of more than 5,000 fentanyl pills.<sup>12</sup>
- September 2020:** A man and a woman faced felony drug charges after police searched their Williston motel room and found multiple illicit substances, including 132 fentanyl pills.<sup>13</sup>
- July 2020:** Fargo police issued a public warning after an increase in poisonings linked to counterfeit pills made with fentanyl.<sup>14</sup>
- June 2020:** The Devils Lake Police Department warned that counterfeit Percocet and OxyContin pills containing fentanyl were to blame for a series of poisonings in the Lake Region area.<sup>15</sup>
- March 2020:** A 24-year-old Grand Forks man died after he took a counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl.<sup>16</sup>
- October 2019:** The leader of a Texas-based fake fentanyl pill drug ring received a 30-year sentence. Pills sold by this ring caused serious bodily injury to two residents of North Dakota.<sup>17</sup>
- July 2019:** Daniel Vivas Ceron pleaded guilty to operating an international drug trafficking ring while incarcerated in Canada from 2013 to 2017. The ring shipped several hundred pounds of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues across the U.S., causing 15 poisonings in North Dakota, Oregon, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Rhode Island, including four fatalities, one of which was Grand Forks resident 18-year-old Bailey Henke.<sup>18</sup>
- February 2019:** The Jamestown Police Department reported seizing counterfeit oxycodone pills that contained fentanyl.<sup>19</sup>
- June 2018:** The U.S. Attorney's Office in Fargo indicted a Rhode Island man for his alleged role in a drug trafficking ring that distributed tens of thousands of counterfeit fentanyl pills throughout the U.S.<sup>20</sup>

- October 2017:** Chinese national Jian Zhang and eight other individuals were indicted in Fargo. Zhang faced multiple charges including Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute and Distribute Controlled Substances and Controlled Substance Analogues Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury and Death.<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Department of Justice issued a superseding indictment in April 2018, bringing the total number of defendants in this case to 28.<sup>21</sup>
- August 2017:** Police in Grand Forks issued a warning to members of the public after four people suffered from fentanyl poisoning in just a few days.<sup>22</sup>
- May 2017:** The indictment of Aaron Shamo from Utah shows his fentanyl drug ring shipped 500 counterfeit pills into North Dakota.<sup>23</sup>
- March 2017:** The Narcotics Task Force seized hundreds of counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.<sup>24</sup>
- March 2017:** Authorities arrested six residents of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, Minnesota for fentanyl pill trafficking after fake oxycodone pills they sold caused a Grand Forks man to overdose.<sup>25</sup> Over the course of 2017 and 2018, six conspirators pleaded guilty in state or federal court and received sentences ranging from 24 to 65 months.<sup>26</sup>

## BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, two in North Dakota, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>27</sup>
- February–June 2012:** Two North Dakota doctors were among the 136 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit Avastin or Altezuan from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.<sup>28</sup>

## MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

- March 2016:** The FDA warned four doctors and clinics in North Dakota 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>29</sup>
- July 2013:** The FDA warned two medical practices in North Dakota to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.<sup>30</sup>

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