

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Maryland

Baltimore County, December 2017: A police station was evacuated after 3 officers were sickened by fentanyl exposure

Carroll County, April 2016: Authorities warned that residents had died after taking fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills

Fentanyl-related deaths statewide more than tripled, from 340 to 1,119 from 2015 to 2016

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.

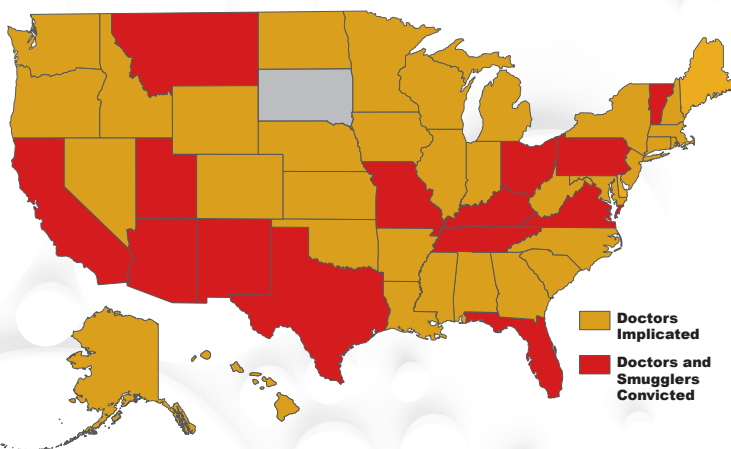
Fentanyl is a serious threat in Maryland. **Fentanyl-related deaths tripled between 2015 and 2016.** Anne Arundel, Cecil and Carroll Counties have all reported finding counterfeit pills made with fentanyl since 2017. Law enforcement seized of **7,500 grams of fentanyl powder (2.5 million lethal doses)** from a Baltimore corner store in December 2017, and arrested 19 people to break up a New York-to-Maryland drug distribution chain in March 2018.

40 Maryland Doctors Implicated in Fake Drug Rings

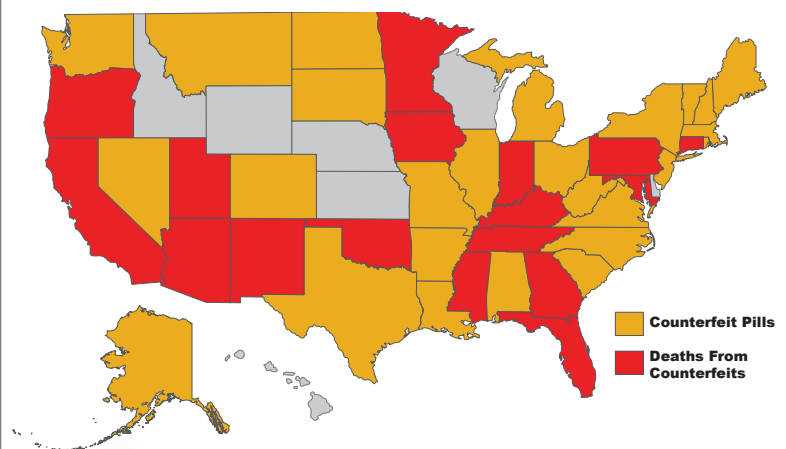
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Maryland as well. 40 medical practices in Maryland have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given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

Opening the U.S.'s closed drug supply chain puts 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 (2012–2018)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of Maryland residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- March 2018:** 19 members of a drug ring were indicted for moving heroin and fentanyl from New York City to Maryland. Authorities seized 66 grams of fentanyl and a total of 1,270 grams of heroin and cocaine over the course of the investigation.¹
- December 2017:** A Baltimore County precinct was evacuated and three police officers sought treatment for fentanyl exposure after they were sickened while processing a white powder after an arrest.²
- December 2017:** Police raided a corner store in central Baltimore and found 7,500 grams of fentanyl.³
- 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 2017.⁴ By December 2017, the number of fatal fentanyl poisonings had climbed to at least 97.⁵
- 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 2016.⁶
- May 2017:** Maryland State Police warned that counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl had been found in Anne Arundel County.⁷
- May 2017:** Paramedics who treated a Harford County, Maryland sheriff's deputy with Narcan for fentanyl exposure had to seek treatment themselves.⁸
- 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.⁹
- 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.¹⁰

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.¹¹
- 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.¹²
- 2012–2013:** The FDA warned 10 Maryland doctors offices and more than 500 across the country to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.¹³

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.¹⁴
- 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.¹⁵

Other Drugs

- 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.¹⁶
- 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.¹⁷
- 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.¹⁸

Footnotes

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4. Phil Davis, “Medical Examiner: Fentanyl Responsible for 83 Percent of Fatal Overdoses in Anne Arundel,” *The Capital Gazette*, June 21, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2Gc89jL>.
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6. Bob Zimmeroff, “DHMH Releases 2016 Overdose Death Data,” *The Dorchester Banner*, June 16, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2GcNibe>.
7. Phil Davis, “Oxycodone Laced With Dangerous Fentanyl Found in Anne Arundel,” *The Capital Gazette*, May 25, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2CRCug3>.
8. Andrea K. McDaniels and Erika Butler, “Deputy, Two EMS Providers Treated For Overdose Symptoms Responding To Call,” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 23, 2017, <http://bsun.md/2HPzPyn>.
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10. Michel Elbin, “Carroll County Health Department Warns Street Pills May Be Laced With Fentanyl,” *The Carroll County Times*, April 20, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2G8WGjn>.
11. “FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased Counterfeit or Unapproved Prescription Drugs,” U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last updated August 17, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
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14. “FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...,” <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
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