

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in New Mexico

April 2018: Police arrested a couple transporting 5,000 fentanyl pills to Albuquerque

October 2016: 20 New Mexico residents died after taking fentanyl-laced oxycodone pills

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.

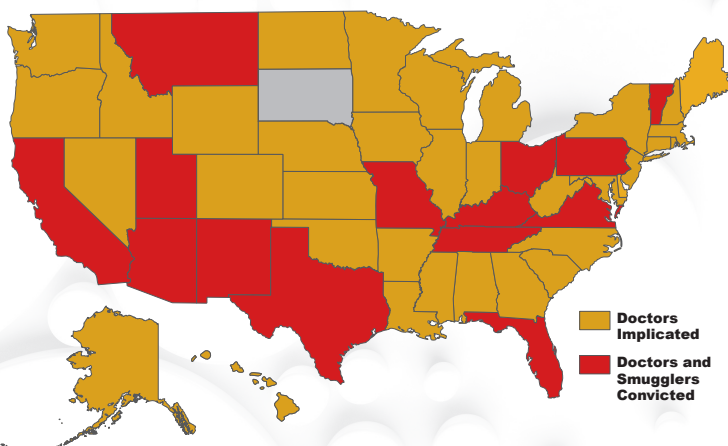
Fentanyl is a deadly threat to New Mexico. **In October 2016, the New Mexico health department warned that 20 residents had died after taking counterfeit oxycodone pills that had been made with fentanyl.** Counterfeit pills made with fentanyl have since been seized en route to New Mexico from California, and police departments in Albuquerque and Santa Fe have reported fentanyl in pill and powder form turning up in drug searches in their communities.

Ten New Mexico Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

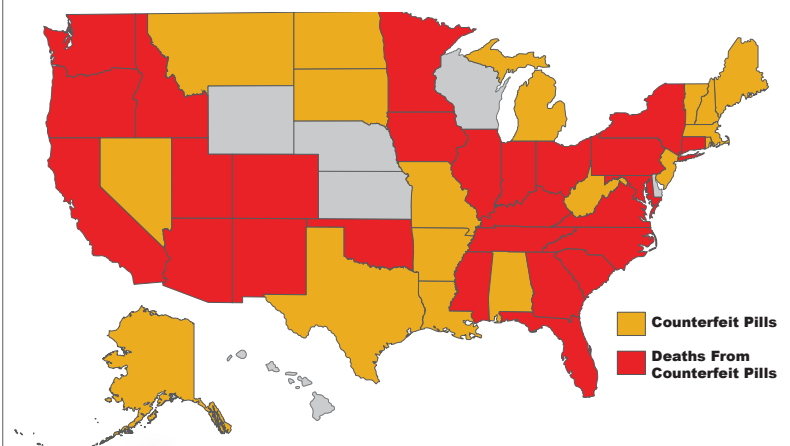
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched New Mexico as well. Ten medical practices in New Mexico have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were 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 Mexico 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 Mexico (2012–2018)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of New Mexico residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- April 2018:** During a traffic stop, Arizona authorities found 5,000 fentanyl pills stashed in a vehicle that was en route to New Mexico from California. Police arrested a man and a woman.¹
- April 2017:** Federal drug officials warned that fake oxycodone made with fentanyl had begun appearing on Albuquerque streets.²
- October 2016:** Health officials and federal narcotic agents opened an investigation after 20 New Mexico residents died after taking counterfeit oxycodone pills laced with fentanyl.³
- March 2015:** U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents seized three kilograms of fentanyl hidden in a suitcase at a Greyhound bus station in Albuquerque.⁴

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including one doctor's office in New Mexico, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁵
- February–June 2012:** One New Mexico doctor was 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.⁶

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned seven New Mexico 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. Seven doctors had to be warned twice.⁷
- July 2013:** The FDA warned one doctor in New Mexico and more than 230 nationwide to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.⁸

Footnotes

1. "Couple Suspected of Smuggling Meth, Fentanyl Into Arizona," *U.S. News and World Report*, April 6, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2AZSEIq>.
2. Colton Shone, "Fake Oxycodone Appearing on Albuquerque Streets," *KOB TV*, April 6, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2OV2hLp>.
3. Mike Gallagher, "Officials Investigating 20 Deaths From Fake Oxycodone Pills," *Albuquerque Journal*, October 6, 2016, <https://bit.ly/2M2mGRh>.
4. Mike Gallagher, "Fentanyl: a New Player in Deadly Drug Epidemic," *Albuquerque Journal*, February 15, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2OwPkXp>.
5. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased Counterfeit or Unapproved Prescription Drugs, 2012–2014," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last updated June 12, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
6. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
7. "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>.
8. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.