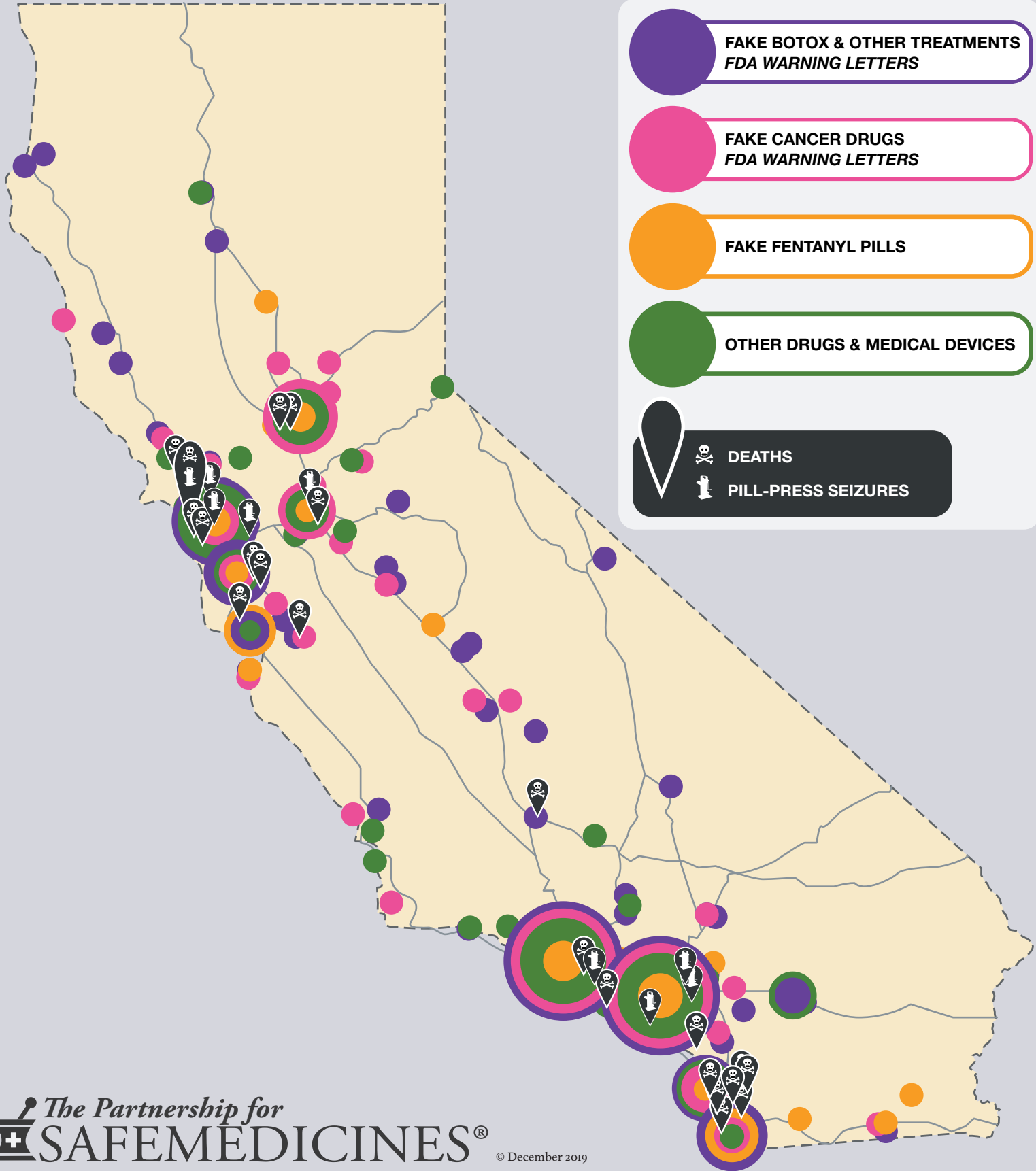


THE DEADLY COUNTERFEIT DRUG TRADE THRIVES IN CALIFORNIA

Counterfeit pills, intravenous and injectable medications have injured and even killed, California patients.



The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in California

Counterfeit drug smugglers have lined their own pockets by infiltrating the illicit opioid market, the prescription drug supply, and traditional markets to the detriment of California's residents.

Unregulated prescription drugs—counterfeit Avastin, fake Botox, and black-market osteoporosis drugs, among others—have also touched California. Between 2012 and 2016, 516 different medical practices in California were among more than 3,000 nationwide that were implicated in various black-market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families of patients whose doctors purchased counterfeit Avastin will never be sure whether their loved one's lives were cut short by these fake medicines. Since 2014, authorities in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties have pursued six different investigations into illegally imported and counterfeit medicines (some made of plastic) in small markets, parks and on the street.¹ Patients may never know that the medicine they purchased at a market was contaminated with poison..

Since 2015, the country has seen a terrible upsurge in counterfeit prescription pills laced with fentanyl or its deadlier variants. Even a fraction of a single pill can mean death in less than 30 minutes of ingesting it. **In March and April 2016, 53 people in the Sacramento overdosed and 14 died after taking counterfeit pills made with fentanyl.**² Newspapers have reported the deaths of more than 30 people—residents of Bakersfield, Camp Pendleton, Daly City, Encinitas, Hollister, La Jolla, Petaluma, Poway, Ramona, Rolling Hills Estates, Sacramento, San Bruno, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, Santee, Studio City, Valley Center, and Santa Clara County, Santa Cruz County and Yolo County—since then.³ Many more California residents may have died fentanyl poisoning after encountering these pills, but not all prescription pill deaths are investigated for counterfeit drugs, and not all families publicly share their losses.

The only way to protect Americans from these dangers is to protect and strengthen the closed U.S. supply chain, which holds drug manufacturers accountable for safety regulations.

To see a list of counterfeit drug incidents in California between 2012 and 2018, please consult our [2018 Infosheet](#).

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