

The Partnership for **SAFEMEDICINES®** **COUNTERFEIT MEDICINE REPORT**

Iowa, July 2022 - January 2023

Since July 2022, Iowa has been inundated by fake pharmaceutical pills containing fentanyl. Governor Kim Reynolds warned about the dangers of fake pills containing fentanyl, however her warning did not prevent the poisoning of a young lady in Des Moines. She died in August after ingesting a counterfeit Xanax pill sold to her via Snapchat. Despite law enforcement efforts that have confiscated quantities of up to 34,000 fake pills in a single action, deaths from these fakes are still mounting. Defendants in cases involving fentanyl pills from Cedar Falls, Council Bluffs, and Dubuque were all sentenced since July.

Patients can be exposed to counterfeit medicines when doctors source medications from outside the secure U.S. drug supply chain. Between 2012 and 2019, nine doctors and medical practices in Iowa received warning letters from the U.S. FDA to stop purchasing medications from known black market wholesalers. However, humans are not always the target of counterfeit medicine. In July, a McClelland resident was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison for operating an illegal pharmacy that sold hundreds of thousands of misbranded drugs to be used on dogs and farm animals.

Recent Incidents

January 2023

Parents warn others after son killed by fentanyl pill: Amanda Rooker, "[Des Moines parents warn about dangers of fentanyl following their son's death](#)," *KCCI Des Moines*, January 17, 2023.

December 2022

Dubuque man arrested with fentanyl pills: "[Police: Dubuque man arrested with 1,270 pills, mostly oxy. fentanyl](#)," *Telegraph Herald*, December 22, 2022.

November 2022

Des Moines men sentenced for fentanyl pill death: "[Two Des Moines men sentenced to federal prison for fentanyl overdose death](#)," U.S. Department of Justice, November 21, 2022.

Scan the QR code or go to safedr ug/IA-page for more information on counterfeit incidents in Iowa.



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October 2022

Council Bluffs woman sentenced in case involving fentanyl pills: “[Council Bluffs woman sentenced in methamphetamine and fentanyl distribution conspiracy](#),” U.S. Department of Justice, October 28, 2022.

Avoca family speaking out after loved one killed by a fentanyl pill: Liam Halawith, “[‘Just like a nightmare’: fentanyl’s damages to Iowa communities](#),” *The Daily Iowan*, October 25, 2022.

Guilty pleas from dealers who sold fentanyl pills: “[On the docket: two more plead in fentanyl case after investigation of fentanyl overdoses](#),” *Atlantic News Telegram*, October 24, 2022.

Cedar Falls resident sentenced for drug distribution, including fentanyl pills: “[One Iowan and two Mexicans sentenced to federal prison for agreeing to distribute meth and fentanyl in Waterloo](#),” U.S. Department of Justice, October 14, 2022. September 2022

August 2022

Des Moines resident killed by fake pill sold on Snapchat: James Stratton, “[Des Moines family, seven others sue Snapchat alleging app facilitated sale of deadly pills](#),” *KCCI Des Moines*, January 20, 2023.

July 2022

McClelland man sentenced for running illegal online pharmacy: “[Illegal pharmacy operator sentenced to federal prison](#),” U.S. Department of Justice, July 29, 2022.

Warning from the governor about fake pills made with fentanyl: “[Gov. Reynolds and officials warn Iowans of dangerous fentanyl and fake pills](#),” Office of the Governor of Iowa Kim Reynolds, July 12, 2022.

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