

THE DEADLY COUNTERFEIT DRUG TRADE THRIVES IN MINNESOTA

Chanhassen, August 2016: Investigators announced that pills seized at Paisley Park after Prince's death were counterfeits containing fentanyl.

Eagan, 2007–2015: A company allegedly sold almost \$400 million in prescription drugs from illegal, unlicensed sources to wholesalers and pharmacies in 40 states.

May 2013: FDA warned seven medical practices to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller that sold 31 non FDA-approved medications, including fake cancer medicine.

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.

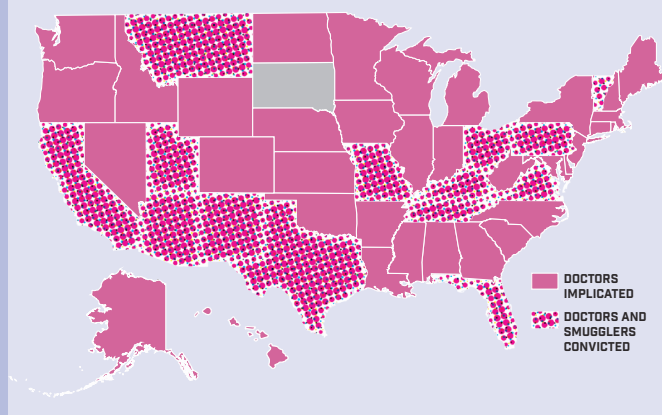
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Minnesota. In April 2016, fentanyl took the life of acclaimed performer Prince at his home in Chanhassen, but he is far from the only one. Sarah Doppler of Golden Valley and a teenage couple from Chisago County were all charged after they sold counterfeit pills that contained fatal levels of fentanyl.

21 MINNESOTA DOCTORS LINKED TO FAKE DRUG RINGS

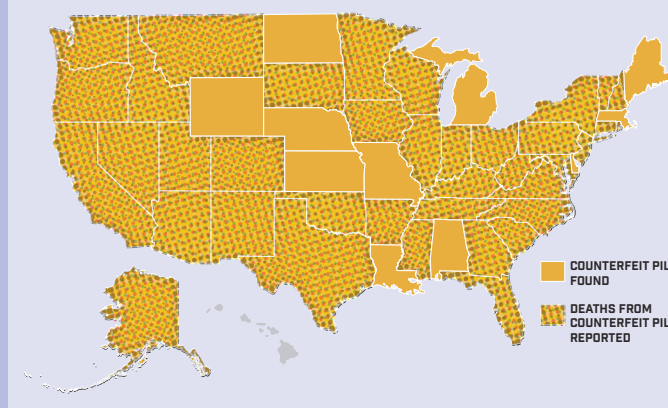
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Minnesota as well. 21 different medical practices in Minnesota have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved 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 MINNESOTA LIVES AT RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INVESTIGATIONS IN MINNESOTA (2009–2019)



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

NOTE THAT EACH INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE AFFECTED HUNDREDS OF MINNESOTA RESIDENTS.

COUNTERFEIT PILLS CONTAINING FENTANYL

- October 2019:** Authorities arraigned a St. Cloud man who allegedly provided a counterfeit oxycodone pill to a man who died of fentanyl poisoning in February 2019.¹
- March 2019:** Minnesota's Department of Public Safety issued a public warning when a 38-year-old woman in Mankato died after taking a counterfeit oxycodone pill that contained fentanyl.² Police charged the man who allegedly sold her the pills the following month.³
- November 2018:** A man received probation for distributing counterfeit, fentanyl-laced oxycodone pills that he had purchased online. Three Northfield residents overdosed after taking those pills, but first responders were able to revive them.⁴
- March 2018:** A Chisago County man received an eight-year sentence after a jury convicted him of the third-degree murder of an 18-year-old who was fatally poisoned by a counterfeit oxycodone made with fentanyl in 2016.⁵ His girlfriend and accomplice, who was convicted of third-degree unintentional aiding and abetting murder, received a 45-day county jail sentence and mandatory enrollment in a residential treatment program.⁶
- January 2018:** A man in Grand Forks, North Dakota received 65 months in jail for his role in a drug trafficking ring that sold counterfeit oxycodone made with fentanyl in northwest Minnesota and North Dakota.⁷
- December 2017:** Sarah Doppler of Golden Valley faced a charge of third-degree murder for selling counterfeit pills to a man who died after taking them. Tests showed the pills contained fentanyl and U-47700.⁸ After pleading guilty, Doppler received a sentence of one year in the Hennepin County workhouse.⁹
- May 2017:** The U.S. District Court, District of Utah's indictment of Aaron Shamo showed that his fentanyl drug ring shipped counterfeit pills into Minnesota.¹⁰
- August 2016:** Local officials warned about the dangers of counterfeit pills made with fentanyl after test results of pills found at Prince's home were released to the public.¹¹
- April 2016:** Prince Rogers Nelson was found dead in an elevator at Paisley Park. Testing showed hydrocodone pills seized after his death contained fentanyl. Prince weighed only 112 pounds at the time of his death and his autopsy showed such a high level of fentanyl that would have killed anyone.¹² To date no one has been charged in Nelson's death.
- April 2016:** Authorities warned Minnesotans that fentanyl had arrived in the state. Police began investigating after a series of deaths the previous month.¹³

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, seven in Minnesota, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹⁴

MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

- March 2016:** The FDA warned 11 doctors and clinics in Minnesota 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.¹⁵
- July 2013:** The FDA warned two doctors and medical practices in Minnesota to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.¹⁶
- November 2012:** One Minnesota doctor was among the 350 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of Botox from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.¹⁷

OTHER DRUGS

- October 2018:** Police seized misbranded and counterfeit drugs from vendors at a Hmong market in St. Paul.¹⁸
- May 2015:** Minnesota Independent Cooperative Inc. (MIC) was indicted for selling almost \$400 million in prescription drugs from illegal, unlicensed sources to wholesalers and pharmacies in 40 states. The indictment alleged that MIC employees created phony invoices and purchase orders to hide the drugs' origins before selling them.¹⁹ This case is still active in the courts.
- March 2015:** The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office seized counterfeit drugs for sale by vendors at the Hmongtown Marketplace in St. Paul. Seven vendors at the same market were charged in 2013 with selling counterfeit drugs and syringes.²⁰
- October 2009:** Two Twin Cities men were indicted for shipping more than 15,000 doses of counterfeit drugs to customers.²¹ Each man was sentenced to nine months in prison and ordered to pay a fine of more than \$21,750 in April 2010.²²

FOOTNOTES

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