

Fake Medicine Has Staked a Claim in the Sooner State



OKLAHOMA'S FENTANYL PILL PROBLEM HAS EXPLODED

The first report of counterfeit pills containing fentanyl in Oklahoma came in 2016, but there has been a dramatic uptick in reported fentanyl pill incidents in the state since the beginning of 2020. In October 2020, the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics reported that at least ten deaths had been caused by counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl that year. Law enforcement in Tulsa has seized pill presses twice so far in 2021, meaning that counterfeit pills are not just flowing into the state. They are being made there as well.



January 2021, Tulsa: Police arrested a man after finding a pill press, over one pound of suspected fentanyl powder, and numerous blue pills inside his home.



June 2020, Lawton: A woman died after ingesting a counterfeit Roxicodone pill laced with fentanyl.



May 2021, Tulsa: A working pill press and multiple dies to produce counterfeit pills were found in the back room of a liquor store.

FAKE MEDICINE HAS SHOWN UP IN LEGITIMATE PLACES



Counterfeit medicine has been found in many places, including in doctors' offices. Between 2012 and 2016, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration sent warning letters to over 3,000 doctors and clinics across the country telling them to stop purchasing medications from known black-market wholesalers. Thirty-six of those letters came to doctors in Oklahoma. In April 2021, the former owner of a medical spa in Tulsa admitted to using non-FDA-approved cosmetic injectables on her clients.

Sooners should not have to worry if their medicine is real or fake. Protect them by strengthening the security of the U.S. drug supply chain.

COUNTERFEIT & BLACK MARKET DRUG INCIDENTS IN OKLAHOMA, 2012-2021

FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- May 2021:** The Lincoln Police Department warned that residents had suffered fentanyl poisoning because of counterfeit pills being sold on the streets.¹
- March 2021:** Deputies seized 750 fentanyl pills during a traffic stop in Oklahoma City.²
- January 2021:** Tulsa police officers arrested a man after a search of his home turned up a pill press, multiple bags of white and blue powder, 646 grams of suspected fentanyl powder, and numerous blue pills.³
- January 2021:** Three-and-one-half pounds of fentanyl pills were seized by police from a car driving through Oklahoma City on its way to Kentucky.⁴ Earlier in the same month, police arrested two individuals driving from Phoenix, Arizona to Cleveland, Ohio who were in possession of 10,000 fentanyl pills.⁵
- January 2021:** Oklahoma's Attorney General filed charges against a man who allegedly sold counterfeit oxycodone pills to two people, one of whom died a short time after taking the pill.⁶
- November 2020:** A Lawton woman was arrested after she allegedly sold counterfeit Roxicodone pills containing fentanyl that killed a woman in June.⁷
- October 2020:** A Tulsa mother warned the public about the dangers of counterfeit pills after her daughter, Emily Sparks of Oklahoma City, died in June after she took a fake oxycodone that was made with fentanyl.⁸
- October 2020:** The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics announced that fake oxycodone pills made with fentanyl were responsible for at least ten deaths over the past five months.⁹
- September 2020:** The Oklahoma Attorney General added murder charges to existing charges against three men who were allegedly selling counterfeit oxycodone made with fentanyl in the Oklahoma City area.¹⁰
- August 2020:** Lea Marie Montgomery of Oklahoma City died after she ingested a counterfeit oxycodone that contained fentanyl.¹¹
- May 2020:** Authorities confirmed that two recent deaths in Oklahoma County were from counterfeit pills containing fentanyl.¹²
- April 2020:** A 19-year-old woman died in Lone Grove after taking what turned out to be a counterfeit pill containing fentanyl. Police charged the man who provided her with the pill six months after her death.¹³
- December 2019:** A six-week investigation ended with an east Tulsa man arrested and charged with allegedly trafficking fentanyl pills and methamphetamine.¹⁴
- September 2018:** The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control reported that one individual died and another was hospitalized after ingesting counterfeit oxycodone pills laced with fentanyl.¹⁵
- November 2017:** The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics announced the discovery of six new fentanyl analogues in autopsy reports between May and November. They also arrested a man in southern Oklahoma who was making counterfeit pills with fentanyl.¹⁶
- June 2016:** Law enforcement and first responders were warned to look out for pills made to look like Lortab and oxycodone, but that actually contain fentanyl.¹⁷
- March 2016:** Oklahoma City resident Jim Hadley woke up one morning to find his wife, sister-in-law, and stepson dead. Toxicology reports revealed that all three had taken prescription painkillers that contained fentanyl.¹⁸

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, six in Oklahoma, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹⁹
- February–June 2012:** The FDA warned 139 medical practices, six in Oklahoma, to stop doing business with Richards Pharma, Clinical Care, Quality Specialty Products (QSP), Montana Healthcare Solutions, or Bridgewater Medical. All of these companies sold counterfeit cancer medications.²⁰

MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

- April 2021:** The owner of a former medical spa in Tulsa pleaded guilty in federal court to injecting clients with non-FDA-approved dermal fillers.²¹
- September 2019:** A Tulsa doctor was indicted for allegedly injecting patients with non-FDA-approved Botox that he purchased from unlicensed sources in Gibraltar, Great Britain, Ireland, Malta, and Pakistan dating back as far as August 2009.²²
- March 2016:** The FDA warned 19 doctors and clinics in Oklahoma 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.²³
- July 2013:** The FDA warned five doctors and medical practices in Oklahoma to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.²⁴

OTHER DRUGS

- May 2021:** Police in Tulsa seized a pill press that was being operated in the back room of a liquor store. Dies capable of producing pills that looked like Xanax and Percocet were also seized.²⁵
- January 2021:** Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics agents arrested a man in Norman who they said was responsible for trafficking large amounts of counterfeit pills and illicit drugs throughout the state. A search of the man's home turned up thousands of suspected counterfeit Xanax pills and over 1,000 Adderall pills.²⁶
- March 2013:** Michael Schlueter and Thomas Variola, owners of Oklahoma Male Clinic, were sentenced in federal court and had their practice closed. The clinic used misbranded drugs to treat their customers with weight problems and sexual dysfunction.²⁷

Footnotes

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