

Fake Medicine Found on Oregon Streets and in Doctors' Offices



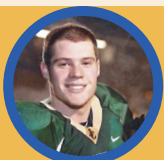
In 2020, as law enforcement seized counterfeit pills made with fentanyl and shut down rings that trafficked them in Eugene, Central Point, Medford, and Umatilla and Morrow counties, Oregon experienced a precipitous rise in overdose deaths.¹ Medford's Area Drug and Gang Enforcement seized 60,000 of the pills and a Beaverton man received an eight-year sentence for 86,000 fake oxycodone pills in 2019. And 2016 and 2017 saw the fentanyl poisoning deaths of two Portland residents who thought they were taking prescription medication; warnings in Portland and Salem, and the seizure of two pill presses that had been churning out fake oxycodone and Valium pills.



October 2020: Law enforcement shut down a Eugene-based operation that distributed fentanyl pills and other drugs from Mexico around the state.



July 2019: Medford police seized 60,000-80,000 fentanyl-laced fake oxycodone pills they found in a van they stopped on Interstate-5.



January 2017: A Portland resident died of fentanyl poisoning after taking a pill that he believed was an oxycodone.



Oregon's counterfeit problem isn't limited to fentanyl pills. Prosecutions involving the sale of **illegally imported ED drugs** and **counterfeit cosmetic injectables** have also emerged since 2017, and counterfeits may have made their way into medical practices as well: Since 2012, the **FDA has warned 39 Oregon doctors** to stop buying cancer treatments and injectable medicines from **unlicensed distributors** who had been caught selling counterfeits.

Oregon residents should not have to worry whether their medicine will treat their illnesses or kill them. Protect and strengthen the U.S. drug supply chain.

1. "OHA Sees 70% Increase in Oregon Drug Overdose Deaths During April, May," Oregon Health Authority, October 2020, <https://bit.ly/2NmVwFY>.

COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INVESTIGATIONS IN OREGON, 2012-2020



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS CONTAINING FENTANYL

- October 2020:** The Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team seized more than 8,000 fentanyl pills and arrested 21 suspects who allegedly manufactured and sold fentanyl throughout Umatilla and Morrow counties. An additional 13 suspects had already been arrested in this case.¹
- October 2020:** A federal grand jury indicted a man who allegedly ran a Eugene-based drug-trafficking organization that sourced methamphetamine, heroin and fentanyl pills from Mexico.²
- October 2020:** A federal grand jury in California charged 13 people who allegedly distributed methamphetamine and counterfeit opioid painkillers to Colorado, Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington. During the operation, federal agents seized more than 34,000 counterfeit painkiller pills made with fentanyl.⁴
- September 2020:** Oregon State Police arrested two men from Southern California and seized almost six and one-half pounds of fentanyl pills during a traffic stop near Central Point.⁵
- June 2020:** The U.S. District Court in Medford charged a man for possession of fentanyl after Oregon State Police found methamphetamine and 1,000 fentanyl pills in his vehicle during a traffic stop.⁶
- April 2020:** A man in Portland was arrested after he allegedly tossed 26 grams of heroin and 50 fentanyl pills from his car during a traffic stop.⁷
- April 2020:** Police in Eugene concluded an investigation by seizing over two pounds of heroin and almost 6,000 fentanyl pills and arresting three men during a traffic stop in a Costco parking lot.⁸
- July 2019:** The Medford Area Drug and Gang Enforcement seized 60,000-80,000 fake oxycodone pills made with fentanyl they found in a hidden compartment in a van they stopped on Interstate-5.⁹
- July 2019:** Johnell Cleveland of Happy Valley received a five-year prison sentence. Police found hundreds of fake oxycodone pills made with fentanyl during a March 2018 search of his home, a storage unit in Clackamas, and a stash house in Washington.⁹
- January 2019:** Jared Gillespie of Beaverton received an eight-year sentence for distributing 86,000 counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl that he had purchased online.¹⁰
- November 2018:** The Polk County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police arrested three people after searching a home in Dallas where they found counterfeit pills that contained fentanyl, among other drugs.¹¹
- November 2017:** Federal authorities arrested John William Schantz after a search of his Portland home yielded 800 pills of counterfeit oxycodone and Valium pills, two pill presses, multiple die casts, and other pill manufacturing paraphernalia.¹² Shantz was sentenced to 100 months in prison on September 18, 2019.¹³
- October 2017:** Portland police circulated photographs of fake tablets that contained combinations of fentanyl, heroin, tramadol, and alprazolam, which they found in the Portland area.¹⁴
- June 2017:** Salem Police warned that hundreds of fentanyl pills falsely marked as oxycodone pills were circulating in the area.¹⁵
- January 2017:** Taylor Martinek of Portland died of fentanyl poisoning after taking a pill that he believed was an oxycodone.¹⁶
- August 2016:** A 24-year-old Portland resident died after taking counterfeit OxyContin authorities believed was made with fentanyl. Police seized approximately 2,000 counterfeit oxycodone pills in the course of the investigation.¹⁷
- July 2016:** "Operation Denial" defendant Brandon Corde Hubbard of Portland, received a life sentence and agreed to pay \$17,000 in restitution for importing and distributing fentanyl that led to the death of two North Dakota teenagers and four overdoses (one fatal) at the Multnomah County Jail in March 2015.¹⁸ "Operation Denial" has led to the indictment of 32 people in three countries since 2015.¹⁹

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- April 2015:** The FDA warned 271 medical practices, three in Oregon, to stop buying medicine from unlicensed drug distributor Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.²⁰
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, five in Oregon, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.²¹
- 2012–2013:** The FDA warned more than 500 medical practices across the country—14 in Oregon—to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.²²

OTHER DRUGS:

- August 2020:** Gresham resident Matthew Owens received two years of probation for illegally importing chloroquine powder that a Chinese supplier deliberately mislabeled as “ammonium polyphosphate.” Owens, who had no medical or pharmaceutical background, intended to offer the drug as a COVID-19 treatment.²³
- February 2019:** Salem resident Matthew Burroughs pleaded guilty to introducing misbranded drugs into interstate commerce for selling a pharmaceutical-grade erectile dysfunction drug that was falsely marketed as an herbal remedy for men.²⁴
- June 2018:** Dr. Brenda Roberts of Troutdale surrendered her medical license and pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor for injecting patients with illegally imported Botox and Juvéderm. The DEA also found that Roberts operated a rogue pharmacy that distributed controlled substances to customers across the U.S.²⁵ She received a sentence of six months probation and 40 hours of community service in October 2018.²⁶
- March 2017:** Christopher Stella of Keizer was sentenced to eight months of home detention, to five years of probation, and to pay \$91,071.68 in restitution for selling counterfeit erectile-dysfunction drugs on Craigslist between March 2013 and January 2016.²⁷
- March 2016:** The FDA warned 12 Oregon 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.²⁸
- July 2013:** The FDA warned five medical practices in Oregon to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.²⁹

Footnotes

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