

○ PROSECUTIONS FOR
SELLING FAKE PILLS

✕ DEATHS



The Fake Medicine Trend Is Growing in South Dakota

FAKE FENTANYL PILLS ARE AN URGENT PROBLEM IN THE MOUNT RUSHMORE STATE

The problem of counterfeit fentanyl pills has gotten worse in the state since police first found them in Mitchell in 2017. **Police in Sioux Falls seized over 1,000 fentanyl pills in the first six months of 2021.** A dealer admitted in March 2021 that he knew the pills he sold to Josh Steinfurth and Tanner Schultz were fakes that contained fentanyl. Both men **died from fentanyl poisoning** in August 2020. **Chamberlain, Yankton County, Sioux Falls and Ft. Thompson** have seen prosecutions for selling the counterfeit pills, and the media has reported **deaths in Chamberlain, Sioux Falls, and the Crow Creek Indian Reservation.**



Fake Medicine Has Made Its Way into Real Doctors' Offices

Criminals will stop at nothing to sneak their counterfeit medications into the legitimate U.S. drug supply chain, and medical practices have bought these fakes. Between 2012 and 2016, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration sent letters to over 3,000 doctors' offices across the country warning them to stop purchasing medicine from known black-market wholesalers. The medicines listed in these warning letters covered serious conditions such as cancer, osteoporosis, and migraines.

June 2021, Sioux Falls: resident charged after being found with 1,000 fentanyl pills.



September 2020, Sioux Falls: California man who shipped 100,000 fentanyl pills into South Dakota was sentenced.



July 2020, Ft. Thompson: A woman was sentenced for selling counterfeit pills that killed a man.



South Dakotans need medicine they can rely on. Support and protect the integrity of the U.S. drug supply chain.

COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INVESTIGATIONS IN SOUTH DAKOTA, 2006-2021



FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- June 2021:** Police arrested and charged a Sioux Falls resident found in possession of 1,000 fentanyl pills.¹
- March 2021:** Police arrested a man in a Sioux Falls hotel room found in possession of over 50 pressed pills believed to contain fentanyl as well as 27 grams of powder.²
- March 2021:** Terrell Larry of Sioux Falls admitted that he knew the pills he sold to two men were counterfeits made with fentanyl. Both men, 23-year-old Josh Steinfurth and 24-year-old Tanner Schultz, died of fentanyl poisoning in August 2020.³
- August 2020:** Police in Sioux Falls issued a public warning after seeing an increase in deaths potentially caused by fentanyl. In the warning, the police cited counterfeit oxycodone pills that actually were made with fentanyl or heroin.⁴
- July 2020:** Renita Faye Taylor of Ft. Thompson received a two-year sentence for selling the counterfeit pills containing fentanyl that killed an adult male on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in August 2019.⁵
- February 2020:** A Sioux Falls resident discussed nearly dying the previous summer after taking oxycodone pills that turned out to be fakes made with fentanyl.⁶
- August 2019:** Damon Jobin of Huntington Beach, California appeared in court to face charges he shipped 100,000 counterfeit pills made with cyclopropyl fentanyl to South Dakota.⁷ Jobin pleaded guilty and was sentenced to over 24 years in September 2020.⁸
- March 2019:** 21-year-old Chamberlain resident Alejandro Woodraska died after taking a counterfeit OxyContin made with fentanyl.⁹
- September 2018:** The Sioux Falls area saw a 50 percent increase in drug deaths over the previous year. Fentanyl caused the majority of those deaths.¹⁰
- June 2018:** A man whose vehicle broke down on I-29 was found in possession of two pounds of fentanyl and eight pounds of heroin.¹¹
- March 2018:** Yankton County residents Andrew Coffman and Ty Hauger received jail sentences after they were found in possession of counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl.¹²
- October 2017:** Law enforcement seized approximately 660 fentanyl pills as well as cocaine and other drugs from the home of Cory Poelstra of Yankton. In January 2019, Poelstra received a 121-month sentence in federal prison, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release.¹³
- June 2017:** Police arrested Trevor Harden of Chamberlain after he had purchased 20,000 fentanyl pills and had them delivered to the post office.¹⁴ After pleading guilty, Harden received a 108-month prison sentence in May 2018.¹⁵
- April 2017:** Mitchell resident Jason Hubbs was arrested after police found over 1,000 counterfeit fentanyl pills in his home and vehicle.¹⁶ In federal court, Hubbs admitted to selling the fake pills from October 1, 2016 through April 24, 2017. He received a 70-month prison sentence.¹⁷
- November 2016:** A Utah-based drug counterfeiting operation shipped a buyer in South Dakota counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl.¹⁸ A jury convicted the leader of the drug ring, Aaron Shamo, of running a multi-million dollar counterfeit pill drug ring, and a federal judge sentenced him to life in October 2020.¹⁹
- October 2016:** South Dakota's only clinic for treating opioid addiction reported they had been warned by federal authorities that counterfeit oxycodone made with fentanyl had made its way into South Dakota.²⁰

OTHER INCIDENTS:

- April 2018:** Robert Lytle of Rapid City, Ronald Weir, Jr. of Sioux Falls, and Irina Kossovskaja of Canada received sentences of 12 years, 24 months, and 15 months, respectively, for selling light-emitting medical devices as a cure-all for conditions such as cancer, emphysema, diabetes, autism, HIV, and heart disease. The trio, who particularly targeted seniors, continued the fraud even after a federal court ordered them to stop selling and refund all QLaser purchasers in 2015.²¹

February 2015: Stanley Brower of Canton was indicted for introducing a misbranded drug into interstate commerce after he purchased bottles of Reumofan Plus manufactured in Mexico and relabelled the pills as an herbal supplement.²² The U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued its first warning about Reumofan Plus in June 2012 after receiving dozens of additional adverse event reports, including death and stroke.²³

April 2006: Dr. Tasso Pappas of Sioux Falls pleaded guilty to charges related to treating ten patients with black-market Botox. He received a sentence of probation and paid \$5,465 in fines, and could not practice medicine for one year.²⁴

Footnotes

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15. Judgment, U.S. District Court, District of South Dakota, Southern Division, Case No. 4:17-cr-40054-KES, <http://bit.ly/2CzNKSM>.
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