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**COUNTERFEIT MEDICINE REPORT**

## Tennessee, February 2022 - January 2023

Fake prescription pills made of fentanyl and other deadly drugs have been a problem since 2015, when [deaths were first reported](#). Last year saw a fentanyl death in Elizabethton and prosecutions related to three deaths in Nashville. Law enforcement found fentanyl pills in Bristol, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Sweetwater and Rutherford County. Authorities intercepted thousands of fake oxycodone pills being shipped from California to Nashville. Finally, a mother in Shelby County warned that the counterfeit pill that killed her son on New Year's Eve had contained xylazine, a powerful tranquilizer that does not respond to Narcan.

The problem of counterfeit medicines is not limited to fentanyl pills in Tennessee. The state has also seen prosecutions for illegally imported ED drugs, diverted and counterfeit cancer medication, and illegally imported iron sucrose for kidney dialysis patients. Counterfeits may have made their way into medical practices as well: Between 2012 and 2016 the FDA warned 52 Tennessee doctors to stop buying cancer treatments and injectable medicines from unlicensed distributors who had been caught selling counterfeits. In 2021, three companies in Tennessee were named in a lawsuit filed by Gilead Sciences alleging their participation in a massive counterfeit HIV medication trafficking ring.

### Recent Incidents

November 2022

**Bradley County man sentenced for meth and pill trafficking:** [“Bradley County man sentenced to 20 years in prison for methamphetamine trafficking and firearm offenses,”](#) U.S. Department of Justice, November 10, 2022.

October 2022

**Fentanyl pill death, Elizabethton:** Paul Hess, [“Carter County man charged with murder in overdose death,”](#) WCYB, January 17, 2023.

September 2022

**Seizure of fentanyl pills and other drugs, Knoxville:** Paige Hill, [“Heroin, fentanyl seized from van after traffic stop on I-75, police say,”](#) WVLT, September 30, 2022.

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Scan the QR code or go to [safedr.ug/TN-page](https://safedr ug/TN-page) for more information on counterfeit incidents in Tennessee.



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July 2022

**Thousands of fentanyl pills seized on their way to Nashville:** [“Three California men charged in conspiracy to ship fentanyl-laced oxycodone to middle Tennessee and other states,”](#) U.S. Department of Justice, September 8, 2022.

**Approximately 15,000 fentanyl-laced pills seized, Rutherford County:** [“Nashville man facing charges after 15K fentanyl-laced pills were seized in Rutherford County,”](#) News Channel 5, July 27, 2022.

**Seven indicted for alleged fentanyl pill trafficking, Bristol:** [“Seven indicted, four arrested in connection with sale of fake pills containing fentanyl,”](#) Bristol Herald Courier, July 15, 2022.

**Fentanyl pills seized during traffic stop, Chattanooga:** [“Tennessee Highway Patrol traffic stop leads to suspected fentanyl and cash seizure,”](#) Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, July 6, 2022.

June 2022

**Two men indicted in separate fentanyl pill-related deaths, Nashville:** Kirsten Fiscus, [“Two men facing murder charges after two die in separate fentanyl overdose deaths,”](#) Nashville Tennessean, June 23, 2022.

May 2022

**Fake Xanax pills seized in arrest, Sweetwater:** Paige Hill, [“Sheriff: Suspected drug trafficker arrested in Sweetwater,”](#) WVLT, May 29, 2022.

March 2022

**Smyrna man charged in 2020 fentanyl pill death:** Rachel Wegner, [“Nashville police: Two face charges in separate fentanyl-related deaths,”](#) Nashville Tennessean, March 17, 2022.

February 2022

**Shelby County mother warns about xylazine in a fatal pill:** Jessica Gertler, [“Animal tranquilizer Xylazine a new, deadly drug trend,”](#) WREG, February 7, 2022.

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