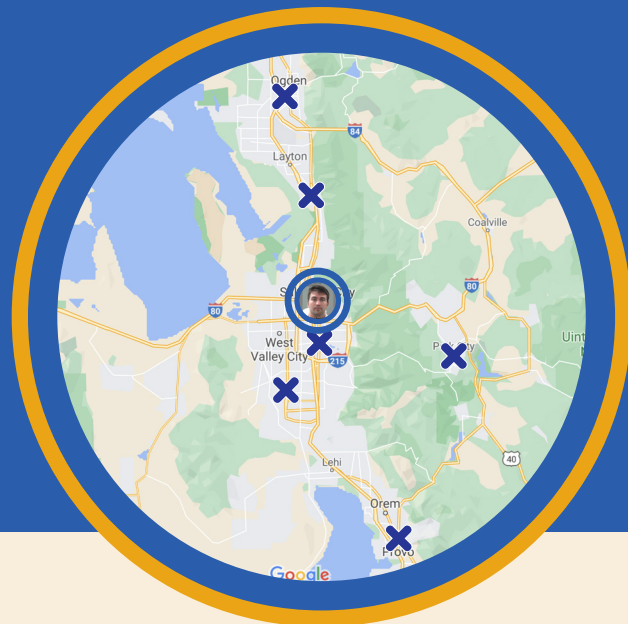


# Counterfeit Medicines Takes Lives in Utah



**Draper, January 2021: CEO pleaded guilty to illegally importing active pharmaceutical ingredients.**



**Iron County, December 2020: Police seized 10,000 suspected fentanyl pills during a traffic stop.**



**Salt Lake City, October 2020: Man sentenced for running a multi-million dollar counterfeit pill ring.**



**Despite the hard work of law enforcement, who have busted two pill manufacturing and distribution rings, counterfeit pills continue to take lives in Utah.**



In December 2020, law enforcement in Iron County seized 10,000 fentanyl pills while performing a vehicle search. That number of fentanyl pills paled in comparison to the **over**

**450,000 counterfeit oxycodone pills** that Cottonwood resident Aaron Shamo shipped to customers in all 50 states before his sentencing in October 2020. Shamo preyed upon peoples' addictions and contributed to their eventual overdose deaths.

The number of Utahns who have lost their lives to a counterfeit pill made with fentanyl will never be known, but **deaths (X) have been confirmed in Park City, South Jordan, West Haven, Murray, Provo, and Davis County.**



**Cases involving counterfeit medications to treat cancer, anemia, anxiety, ADHD, and cosmetic injectables have all happened in the Beehive State.**

Federal prosecutors announced charges against and a guilty plea in January 2021 from the CEO of a Draper company for **illegally importing active pharmaceutical ingredients** from unregistered Chinese manufacturers that were to be made into pills and sold to the state. In November 2019, U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized a shipment of a counterfeit cosmetic injectable. Part of that shipment was destined for a private residence in Utah. From 2012 to 2016, a total of 38 different medical practices in the state received a warning letter from the FDA about purchasing medication from black market distributors who sold **counterfeit cancer medications** or **fake Botox**.

**STOP DRUG COUNTERFEITERS**  
**Support and strengthen the closed drug supply chain to protect patients from injury and death.**

# COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUGS IN UTAH, 2010-2021



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

## FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- December 2020:** Police seized 10,000 suspected fentanyl pills during a vehicle search on I-15 in Iron County.<sup>1</sup>
- October 2020:** A judge sentenced Utah resident Aaron Shamo to life in prison after a jury convicted him of running a multi-million dollar counterfeit drug ring that shipped fentanyl-laced pills to customers in every state of the union.<sup>2</sup> When federal agents raided two homes in Salt Lake County in November 2016, they found synthetic opioid components, bagfuls of cash, a pill press, and 95,000 fentanyl-laced oxycodone pills and counterfeit Xanax.<sup>3</sup>
- August 2020:** Lacey Nichole Crawshaw of St. George received a 33-month prison sentence after pleading guilty to selling counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl.<sup>4</sup>
- May 2020:** Federal prosecutors indicted a North Salt Lake man who allegedly sold counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl that had killed a Park City resident in the previous month.<sup>5</sup>
- October 2019:** Federal prosecutors indicted a Utah man for allegedly buying and distributing tens of thousands of fake fentanyl-laced oxycodone pills and counterfeit alprazolam tablets he purchased from convicted Cottonwood Heights drug trafficker Aaron Shamo. Court documents credit this man for coming up with the idea of counterfeiting oxycodone.<sup>6</sup>
- September 2019:** 23-year-old Brett McDougall died in South Jordan after ingesting what is believed to have been a counterfeit Xanax pill containing fentanyl.<sup>7</sup>
- September 2019:** Hooper resident Adam Hemmelgarn received a 128-month federal prison sentence after he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance. Counterfeit pills he sold killed 22-year-old Jaydon Rogers of West Haven in March 2018.<sup>8</sup>
- August 2019:** A jury convicted Aaron Shamo of running a multi-million dollar counterfeit pill drug ring that shipped fentanyl pills to customers across the U.S.<sup>3</sup> When federal agents raided two homes in Salt Lake County in November 2016, they found synthetic opioid components, bagfuls of cash, a pill press, and 95,000 fentanyl-laced oxycodone pills and counterfeit Xanax.<sup>9</sup>
- July 2019:** A West Jordan man was indicted for supplying the fake oxycodone pills that killed a Murray woman in November 2016.<sup>10</sup>
- February 2018:** DEA agents arrested four people and searched multiple properties in culmination of a year-long investigation into a counterfeit fentanyl pill ring centered in South Jordan.<sup>11</sup>
- October 2017:** The Utah Department of Health reported that fentanyl-related deaths increased by 78 percent between 2015 and 2016.<sup>12</sup>
- March 2017:** A 17-year-old in Morgan County was revived by EMS and sheriff deputies after he overdosed on half of what he thought was an Adderall pill. He purchased the pill from 19-year-old Parker Lewis Pentz, who allegedly ordered the counterfeits on the internet.<sup>13</sup>
- August 2016:** 29-year-old Devin Meldrum of Provo died of fentanyl poisoning after taking a counterfeit oxycodone pill made with fentanyl.<sup>14</sup>
- June 2016:** Layton police officers reported one overdose death as a result of counterfeit Roxicodone pills circulating in Davis County.<sup>15</sup>
- June 2016:** Nathaniel Craigen Jetter was arrested in Sandy, Utah after police found a pill press and other counterfeiting equipment in his hotel room. Jetter, who subsequently pleaded guilty, told police that he was making fentanyl-laced oxycodone pills.<sup>16</sup>

## BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- April 2015:** The FDA warned two Utah medical practices and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.<sup>17</sup>
- April 2015:** Dr. Ali Ben-Jacob pleaded guilty to buying non-FDA approved oncology drugs from a CanadaDrugs.com subsidiary and using them on his patients without their knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

- July 2013:** Michael Lawrence O'Donnell of Pleasant Grove pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a year in prison for selling American healthcare professionals imported, non-FDA approved prescription drugs, including Botox, Zometax, Gemzar, and Aranesp.<sup>19</sup>
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, seven in Utah, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.<sup>20</sup>
- February–June 2012:** One Utah doctor was among the 136 nationwide that received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit Avastin or Altzuan from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.<sup>21</sup>

## OTHER DRUGS

- January 2021:** Federal charges filed against Daniel Richards, the CEO of a pharmacy based in Draper alleged, for illegally importing two active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) from an unregistered manufacturer in China. The pharmacist intended to mix the API with zinc and sell the pills to the state. Richards pleaded guilty to one count of receipt of misbranded drugs.<sup>22</sup>
- November 2019:** Agents with Customs and Border Protection seized a shipment of counterfeit Botox in Cincinnati. The shipment came from China and was destined for private residences in Utah, Texas, and Alabama.<sup>23</sup>
- March 2016:** The FDA warned 16 Utah 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.<sup>24</sup>
- July 2013:** The FDA warned three doctors and medical practices in Utah to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.<sup>25</sup>
- November 2012:** Nine Utah doctors were 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.<sup>26</sup>
- May 2010:** James A. Brinton, of Provo, and Orem resident Noah Sifuentes pleaded guilty to charges related to selling approximately 8 million phentermine pills over the internet to individuals who lacked valid prescription for the controlled substance. Their products, which also included Ritalin, Xanax, and Valium, were smuggled into the country from Mexico.<sup>27</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

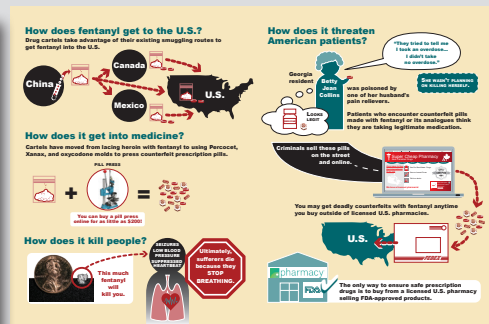
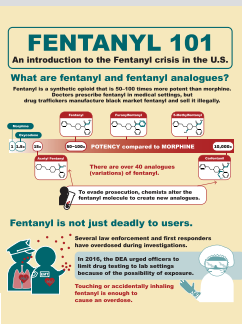
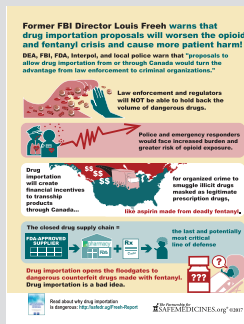
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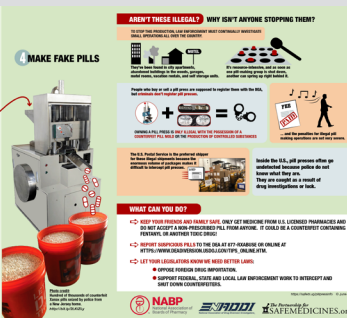
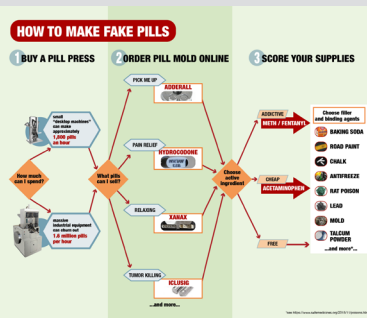
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