

Dangerous Counterfeit Drugs Lurk in West Virginia

STORIES ABOUT COUNTERFEIT DRUGS RARELY EMERGE FROM WEST VIRGINIA, BUT A CLOSER LOOK SHOWS THAT THEY ARE A REAL THREAT:

In 2020, DEA agents broke up a **large illicit steroid manufacturing and distribution** operation in Huntington, and police in Greenbrier County found **counterfeit fentanyl pills** during a traffic stop. In 2019, the Huntington Police Department seized a **large pill press, 239 grams of heroin and fentanyl and a variety of other drugs** from a residence, and DEA agents in Louisville, Kentucky confiscated **counterfeit Adderall** made of methamphetamine on its way to West Virginia. Between 2016 and 2018, authorities reported **counterfeit oxycodone** and **fake Xanax** made with fentanyl, a **counterfeit alprazolam operation** and a fatal fentanyl poisoning in Welch.



Huntington, October 2020:
The DEA dismantled a lab that made and sold illegal steroids.



Huntington, October 2019:
Officers seized a large pill press and 239 grams of opioids.



August 2019: DEA agents intercepted counterfeit Adderall bound for West Virginia.



The opioid epidemic has caused immense suffering to the citizens of the Mountain State. West Virginians shouldn't be victimized by drug counterfeiters, too. Protect them by supporting and strengthening the closed U.S. drug supply chain.



Alongside counterfeits that contain controlled substances, **black market medicines**

also have made their way into doctors' offices. Between 2012 and 2015, the **FDA warned 18 different medical practices in West Virginia** to stop buying their drugs from unlicensed distributors that sold counterfeit cancer medicines or fake Botox. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or if they died from a lack of treatment.

COUNTERFEIT & BLACKMARKET DRUG INCIDENTS IN WEST VIRGINIA, 2010-2020



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- October 2020:** Deputies in Greenbrier County arrested two Georgia residents and confiscated 275 fentanyl pills during a traffic stop near Rainelle.¹
- October 2019:** Huntington police officers arrested three men and seized a large pill press, 239 grams of suspected heroin/fentanyl and a variety of other drugs.²
- November 2017:** The Charleston Police Department reported finding counterfeit oxycodone pills made from pure fentanyl. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' preliminary statistics showed that fentanyl killed more West Virginians than any other drug in 2017.³ Fentanyl-related deaths climbed from 58 to 324 between 2014 and 2016.⁴
- August 2016:** 27 people overdosed and one person died over a six hour period in Huntington, after taking what authorities believed was fentanyl-laced heroin.⁵ Akron, Ohio resident Bruce Lamar Griggs, who sold the fentanyl-laced heroin, was sentenced to 18 years and four months in prison in April 2017.⁶
- June 2016:** West Virginia Poison Center warned that it had been notified of three cases of opioid overdose where patients insisted they had taken Xanax.⁷
- April 2016:** A woman in Welch died after taking fentanyl pills distributed by a New York-based drug trafficking ring.⁸

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- April 2015:** The FDA warned 271 medical practices, two in West Virginia, to stop buying medicine from unlicensed drug distributor Gallant Pharmaceuticals.⁹ Gallant, a northern Virginia-based company that claimed it was Canadian, sold 39 non FDA-approved medications shipped in unreliable conditions from unreliable sources in countries such as India, Switzerland, and Turkey. The federal government convicted and sentenced 12 individuals—executives, sales representatives, administrative staff and others, including a physician in McLean who received the illegal medicines and treated his own patients with them—in connection with the case.¹⁰
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, four in West Virginia, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹¹
- 2012-2013** The FDA warned more than 500 medical practices across the country—five in West Virginia—to stop buying from CanadaDrugs.com subsidiaries that had sold American doctors counterfeit Avastin.¹²

OTHER DRUGS

- October 2020:** The Drug Enforcement Administration dismantled an illegal steroid manufacturing and distribution facility operating out of a private residence in Huntington.¹³
- August 2019:** The Louisville Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration intercepted counterfeit Adderall made with methamphetamine that was bound for Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia.¹⁴
- August 2016:** A St. Albans businessman was sentenced to five years in prison for crimes related to cocaine trafficking. Federal agents who raided his home in October 2015 found controlled substances, more than 60 guns, and drug paraphernalia, including pill presses allegedly used to make counterfeit Xanax.¹⁵
- March 2016:** The FDA warned five West Virginia 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.¹⁶
- July 2013:** Two West Virginia medical practices were among 233 who the FDA warned for buying fraudulent versions of Botox from "Online Botox Pharmacy," "Onlinebotox.com," and "Onlinebotox."¹⁷

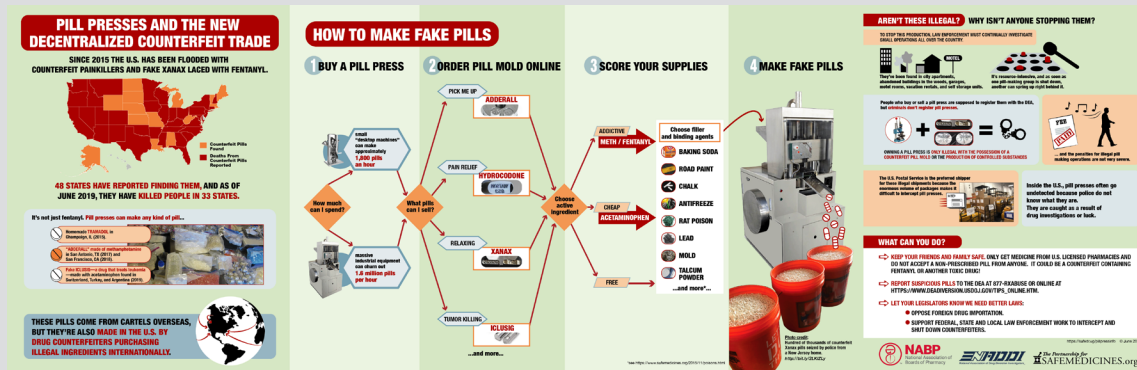
FOOTNOTES

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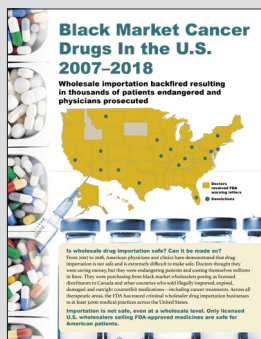
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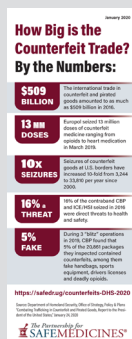
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