

Hawaii Is Not Immune to Threat of Fake Medicine



FAKE PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL ARE NOT JUST A MAINLAND PROBLEM.

The first confirmed report of counterfeit fentanyl pills in Hawaii did not come until October 2020, but it came the same month testimony in a case against Aaron Shamo, the leader of a major fentanyl pill drug trafficking ring in Utah, revealed that the operation shipped fentanyl pills to addresses in all fifty states between July 2015 and November 2016. With so many counterfeit fentanyl pills being sold on various online marketplaces, it is impossible to know how many have made it into the hands of Hawaiians in the years between.

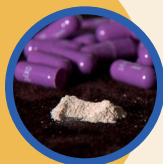
October 2020, Maui: A Makawao man was arrested and police seized 400 suspected fentanyl pills.



October 2019, Honolulu: Police raided a highrise condo of a suspected fentanyl dealer.



October 2013: Dietary supplement pulled from store shelves that was linked to 72 victims. Two victims died, and three required organ transplants.



Protect patients in Hawaii and on the Mainland by securing and strengthening the U.S. drug supply chain.



NO CLASS OF MEDICATION IS SAFE FROM COUNTERFEITERS

As long as they can make money, **counterfeiters will fake any and every type of medication** without thought for the damage done to patients. Whether the medicine is supposed to treat **cancer, osteoarthritis, migraines**, or you name it, counterfeiters only care about how much money they can make.

One way counterfeiters get their fakes to patients is through **black-market wholesalers who sell medicine at prices that are too good to resist**. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned multiple Hawaiian doctors to stop purchasing prescription drugs from wholesalers like these between 2012 and 2016.

Individuals can also expose unsuspecting patients to fake medicine. In November 2017, **a judge sentenced the couple who smuggled non-FDA-approved cosmetic injectables into Honolulu** for years and used them on hundreds of people at local hotels. **Two people suffered permanent nerve damage.**

COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INCIDENTS IN HAWAII, 2012-2020



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- October 2020:** Prosecutors in the sentencing phase against fentanyl-pill kingpin Aaron Shamo stated in a court document that the defendant shipped fake fentanyl pills to every single state.¹
- October 2020:** Maui police warned the public that counterfeit oxycodone pills circulating on the streets had caused several poisonings in the previous month.² Several days after the warning, police arrested a Makawao resident and seized 400 suspected fentanyl pills.³
- October 2019:** Members of the Honolulu SWAT team raided a Moiliili highrise after receiving a tip that the person living there was distributing fentanyl.⁴
- December 2018:** Authorities reported the presence of fentanyl in street drugs being sold in Hawaii.⁵

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including one in Hawaii, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁶

MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

- November 2017:** A federal judge sentenced a Korean national for injecting hundreds of Hawaiians in rented hotel rooms with unapproved cosmetic injectables in a scheme that lasted several years. Two customers suffered permanent nerve damage from their treatments.⁷
- March 2016:** The FDA warned three Hawaii 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.⁸
- July 2013:** The FDA warned one doctor in Hawaii to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.⁹
- November 2012:** Two Hawaii 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.¹⁰

OTHER DRUGS

- April 2016:** Agents with Homeland Security Investigations issued a warning to the public after purchasing counterfeit erectile dysfunction medications during an investigation in Honolulu.¹¹ At the same time, agents announced seizing counterfeit flea treatments allegedly linked to several pet deaths on the mainland that were to be sold at local pet stores.
- October 2013:** Hawaii Department of Health officials ordered the removal of a dietary supplement potentially linked to 29 cases of hepatitis and liver failure. The cases under investigation included one person who died and two people who required liver transplants.¹² In a 2017 article, the total number of victims was 72, with two deaths, three transplants, and 50 individuals needing to be hospitalized.¹³

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7. Lynn Kawanno, "Couple Behind Lucrative Fake Botox Parties at Hawaii Hotels Sentenced," *Hawaii News Now*, November 2, 2017, <https://bit.ly/3ozvUD5>.

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12. Lynn Kawano, "Diet Supplement Linked to Liver Failure Ordered Off Hawaii Shelves," *Hawaii News Now*, October 9, 2013, <https://bit.ly/3lYauV0>.
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