



# Fake Medicine Has Real-World Consequences

## COUNTERFEIT FENTANYL PILLS HAVE WORSENERD THE OPIOID CRISIS IN VERMONT


The state of Vermont has been particularly hard hit by the opioid crisis, and counterfeit fentanyl pills have contributed to the continued loss of life and pain felt in communities across the state. The U.S. Attorney for the District of Vermont announced in April 2021 charges against eight members of a **nationwide drug trafficking and money laundering conspiracy** that prosecutors allege shipped drugs such as **fentanyl pills**, **methamphetamine**, and **cocaine** into communities in Vermont and other states. Across the nation, deaths from counterfeit fentanyl pills are typically underreported, but in Vermont, **deaths have been confirmed in Bennington and St. Albans.**



**April 2021, Burlington: Charges announced against eight members of a nationwide drug trafficking and money laundering conspiracy that sold fentanyl pills.**



**March 2020, Bennington: Woman sentenced for her role in the January 2019 fentanyl pill death of Dawn Bossing.**



**January 2020, Burlington: Man sentenced after pleading guilty to purchasing and reselling large amounts of fake oxycodone pills made with fentanyl and meth.**

## FAKE MEDICINE CAN BE FOUND IN MANY PLACES

Street corners are not the only place where you can find counterfeit pills. **Sometimes, doctors and individuals go outside the legitimate U.S. drug supply chain for personal profit.** Between 2012 and 2016, the U.S. FDA sent warning letters to over 3,000 doctors' offices across the country telling them to stop purchasing medications from known black-market wholesalers. **Four doctors in Vermont received one of those letters from the FDA.**



**Vermonters should not have to worry if their medications are real or fake. Give them peace of mind by protecting the U.S. secure drug supply chain.**

# COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INCIDENTS IN VERMONT, 2012-2021



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

## FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- April 2021:** The U.S. Attorney for the District of Vermont charged eight individuals for their alleged roles in a nationwide drug trafficking conspiracy that included counterfeit pills made with fentanyl, and money laundering.<sup>1</sup>
- December 2019:** A Drug Enforcement Administration operation that spanned the New England region concluded with the arrest of hundreds of individuals and the seizure of drugs with a street value of \$2.5 million, including 75 kilograms of fentanyl and 7,800 fentanyl pills.<sup>2</sup>
- October 2019:** Police arrested a Burlington resident who allegedly sold the counterfeit fentanyl pill that killed Donald Stevens of St. Albans in May.<sup>3</sup>
- January 2019:** Dawn Bossong of Bennington died of fentanyl poisoning after a friend reported she ingested two pills.<sup>4</sup> Authorities indicted two women in May for their involvement in the case.<sup>5</sup> One of them, Beth Brace, pleaded guilty and received a sentence of one to eight years of probation in March 2020.<sup>6</sup>
- January 2018:** Morrisville residents Esperanza Delarosa and Susan Mateo were charged with conspiracy to distribute heroin, fentanyl, and oxycodone.<sup>7</sup> In October 2019, a judge sentenced the women to 69 and six months, respectively.<sup>8</sup>
- May 2017:** Police arrested Dean Shores of Burlington, who bought large quantities of counterfeit oxycodone pills made with both fentanyl and methamphetamine and redistributed them across the United States.<sup>9</sup> Shores pleaded guilty and received a 120-month sentence in January 2020.<sup>10</sup>
- April 2017:** Burlington experienced a string of 19 mostly non-fatal overdoses in the span of two weeks, which caused the mayor and the police to call for a crackdown on fentanyl dealers.<sup>11</sup>
- March 2017:** Vermont's Health Department released a report showing a spike in drug overdoses from both heroin and prescription drugs in the state during 2016. Authorities attributed about half of the deaths to fentanyl.<sup>12</sup>
- August 2016:** The city of Barre had nine overdoses, including one fatality, over a single weekend from what authorities suspected was a batch of heroin that contained fentanyl.<sup>13</sup>
- November 2014:** In mid-October, a rash of fentanyl deaths that started in Hartford and spread to neighboring towns and across the Connecticut River in New Hampshire left two people dead and seven others lucky to be alive. This was the second wave of overdoses to hit the state this year.<sup>14</sup>

## BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- February–June 2012:** One Vermont 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>15</sup>

## MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

- March 2016:** The FDA warned two doctors and clinics in Vermont 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>16</sup>
- November 2012:** One Vermont doctor was among the 350 nationwide who received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of Botox from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs subsidiary.<sup>17</sup>

## OTHER COUNTERFEITS

- February 2017:** Federal authorities arrested a North Carolina man who travelled to Vermont to steal 200 pounds of counterfeit Xanax that a man had smuggled over the Canadian border into Troy via sled in January 2016.<sup>18</sup> The Canadian smuggler, Cedrik Bourgault-Morin of Quebec, received a one-year sentence.<sup>19</sup>

## Footnotes

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