

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in North Carolina

June 2018, Raleigh: Three brothers arrested for making and selling fake Xanax made with fentanyl

May 2017, Iredell County: Police seized 5,000 counterfeit OxyContin during a traffic stop

January 2018, New Hanover County: Police seized almost six pounds of fentanyl in one week

The country has seen an upsurge in counterfeit prescription pills masquerading as painkillers and Xanax. These pills are disguised as real medications but made with deadly fentanyl or its even deadlier variants, and **even a fraction of a single pill can mean death in less than 30 minutes** of ingesting it.

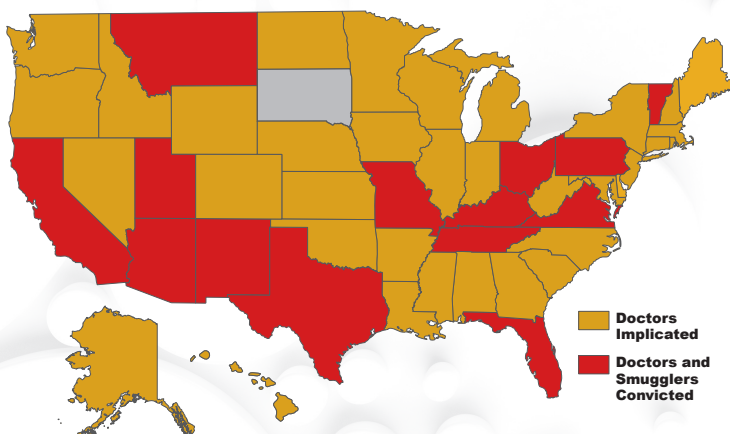
Fentanyl is a serious threat to North Carolina. Deputies arrested a Surry couple in June 2018 who were found with 900 suspected fake fentanyl pills. **Police made two seizures totalling almost six pounds of fentanyl in January 2018.** In December 2017, a woman died in a parking lot in Mooresville after she took counterfeit pills made with fentanyl.

51 North Carolina Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

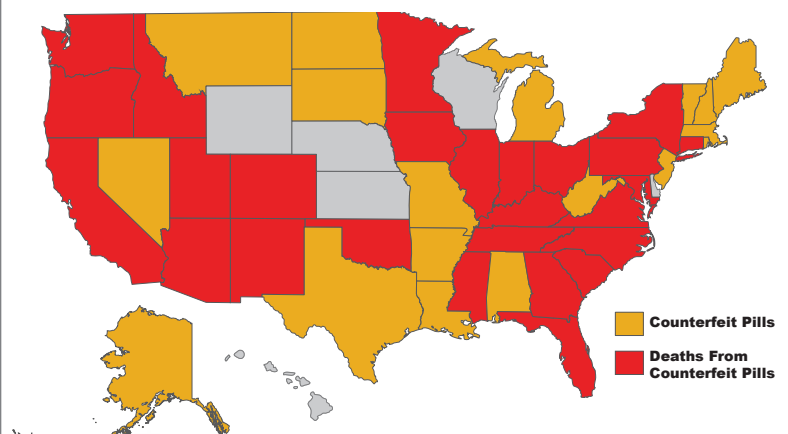
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched North Carolina as well. 51 different medical practices in North Carolina have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved ones were given real medication or fake, and if they died from a lack of treatment.

Opening the U.S.'s closed drug supply chain puts North Carolina lives at risk of serious injury or death.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in North Carolina (2012–2018)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of North Carolina residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- August 2018:** Provisional CDC data about overdose rates showed that people in the state are dying at the second highest rate in the country, and fentanyl played a big role in the increased deaths.¹
- August 2018:** Police in Raleigh arrested a man who was in possession of fentanyl pills and other drugs. The man's arrest warrant noted a previous arrest in October 2017 when officers found nearly one pound of fentanyl in his home.²
- June 2018:** Three brothers in Raleigh allegedly ran a drug ring that manufactured counterfeit Xanax using fentanyl. Holly Spring Police believe the trio were a major supplier to local high school students.³
- June 2018:** Deputies arrested a Surry County couple found in possession of 900 suspected counterfeit 30-milligram Roxicodone pills, as well as other drugs.⁴
- April 2018:** A Mooresville man was charged with second-degree murder after a woman overdosed after taking counterfeit fentanyl pills.⁵
- January 2018:** Detectives with the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office seized 3.3 pounds of fentanyl while executing a search warrant in Wilmington, breaking the record for largest seizure to date set just a few days before.⁶
- January 2018:** The New Hanover County Sheriff's Office arrested four suspects in Wilmington and seized 2.4 pounds of fentanyl.⁷
- May 2017:** Police in Iredell County discovered 5,000 counterfeit OxyContin pills hidden in a paint can with a false bottom during a traffic stop.⁸
- July 2016:** Substance abuse counselors in the Greenville reported that fentanyl and counterfeit pills made with fentanyl had been affecting people in the area.⁹

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- April 2015:** The FDA sent warning letters to two North Carolina doctors and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.¹⁰
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including 14 doctors' offices in North Carolina, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹¹

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned 23 North Carolina 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.¹²
- July 2013:** The FDA warned five doctors and medical practices in North Carolina to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.¹³
- November 2012:** Six North Carolina doctors were 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.¹⁴

Other Counterfeit Drugs

- April 2018:** The Davidson County Sheriff's Office discovered a counterfeit pill operation in Denton. Hundreds of fake pills had already been made to look like alprazolam, oxycodone, and Adderall.¹⁵
- September 2012:** One North Carolina doctor was among the 23 U.S. doctors who received warning letters indicating that they may have purchased counterfeit versions of the osteoporosis injectable medications Prolia and Aclasta from Quality Specialty Products (QSP), a CanadaDrugs.com subsidiary.¹⁶

Footnotes

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3. Colleen Quigley, "Warrants: Triplets Ran Illegal Drug Enterprise out of Luxury Raleigh Apartments," *CBS 17*, June 28, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2OewPam>.
4. Jeff Linville, "Record Drug Bust in Red Brush," *The Mount Airy News*, June 9, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2OeumN8>.
5. "Iredell Man Charged With Murder After Overdose Death," *Statesville Record & Landmark*, April 26, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2D29FTI>.
6. "Two Days After Its Biggest Fentanyl Bust Ever, Sheriff's Office Seizes Even Larger Amount," *WECT 6*, February 1, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2OkeUzf>.
7. "4 Arrested in Wilmington Fentanyl Bust," *WECT 6*, January 29, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2CU9iug>.
8. Allison Latos, "Fentanyl Disguised as OxyContin in Iredell County Drug Bust," *WSOC TV*, May 23, 2017, <https://on.wsocvtv.com/2Muok9s>.
9. Kelly Byrne, "Counterfeit Pills Laced With Fentanyl Contribute to Opioid Epidemic," *WNCT*, July 25, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2NErCvw>.
10. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased Counterfeit or Unapproved Prescription Drugs," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last updated August 17, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
11. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased Counterfeit or Unapproved Prescription Drugs, 2012–2014," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last updated June 12, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
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15. Sharon Myers, "Sheriff's Office, Homeland Security Bust Counterfeit Drug Operation," *The Dispatch*, April 12, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2p4EP2T>.
16. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors..." <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.