


THE DEADLY COUNTERFEIT DRUG TRADE THRIVES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Lawrence, February 2019: One-year-old girl overdosed after putting a fentanyl-laced counterfeit pill in her mouth.

Stoughton, March 2019: Pill press seized along with 10,000 counterfeit Xanax pills during raid on a rented office space.

Palmer, February 2018: Man sentenced to two years in prison for importing and selling misbranded prescription drugs from Pakistan.

59 MASSACHUSETTS DOCTORS LINKED TO FAKE DRUG RINGS

Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Massachusetts as well. 59 different medical practices in Massachusetts 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. 

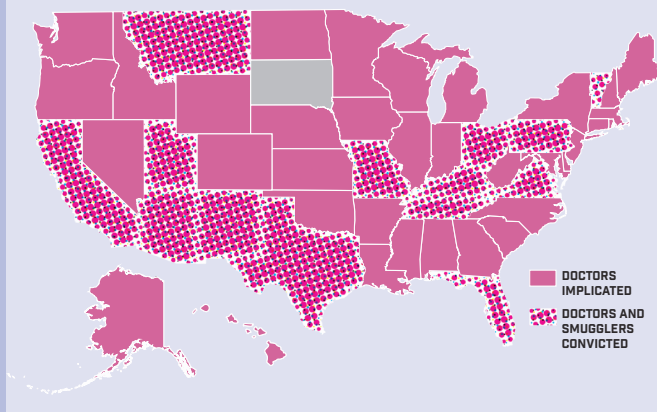
OPENING THE U.S.'S CLOSED DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN PUTS WASHINGTON LIVES AT RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.

THE COUNTRY HAS SEEN AN UPSURGE IN COUNTERFEIT PRESCRIPTION PILLS MASQUERADING AS PAINKILLERS AND XANAX.

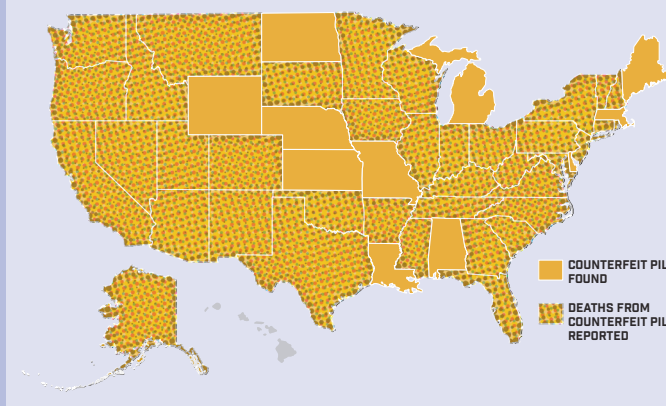
These pills are disguised as real medications but made with deadly fentanyl or its even deadlier variants, and even a fraction of a single pill can mean death in less than 30 minutes of ingesting it.

Fentanyl is a serious threat to Massachusetts. In February 2018, "Operation High Hopes" ended with the arrest of 37 individuals associated with a major drug ring and the seizure of 33 pounds of fentanyl. That amount of fentanyl could kill nearly five million people. In November 2019, several pill presses and 5,700 grams of fentanyl powder were seized in Roxbury.

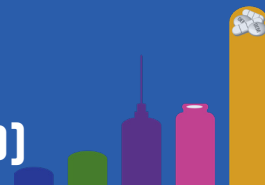
Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



COUNTERFEIT AND BLACK MARKET DRUG INVESTIGATIONS IN MASSACHUSETTS (2012–2019)



BASED ON REPORTED INVESTIGATIONS.

NOTE THAT EACH INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE AFFECTED HUNDREDS OF MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS.

FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT PILLS MADE WITH FENTANYL

- June 2019:** Man from South Deerfield indicted for allegedly selling 114 counterfeit oxycodone made with fentanyl to someone in Kansas.¹
- June 2019:** Roxbury resident sentenced to two years in prison for selling fentanyl powder and counterfeit oxycodone made with fentanyl.²
- February 2019:** Parents of a one-year-old girl in Lawrence arrested after she ended up in the hospital after putting a fentanyl-laced pill in her mouth.³
- August 2018:** DEA agents arrested a California man in North Andover in possession of what law enforcement believed was four kilograms of heroin, five kilograms of fentanyl, and 5,000 pills. A search of the vehicle turned up another two kilograms of narcotics and approximately 5,000 additional pills.⁴
- August 2018:** A Chinese national living in Massachusetts pleaded guilty for his role in a global opioid and fentanyl distribution ring that illegally shipped narcotics and counterfeit prescription drugs to his warehouse in Woburn so that packages could be forwarded to customers throughout the United States.⁵ The two alleged leaders of the drug ring, who claimed they could manufacture counterfeit cancer medicines, were indicted later in the month.⁶
- May 2018:** Raids at apartments in Lynn, Peabody, and Saugus turned up multiple stashes of drugs, including two and one-half kilograms of heroin and fentanyl and 1,900 oxycodone pills.⁷
- April 2018:** Law enforcement brought down a major drug ring run by two brothers who lived in Lawrence. Police arrested 45 people tied to the ring and seized 60 pounds of fentanyl.⁸
- March 2018:** U.S. Department of Justice announced the indictment of two Worcester men found in possession of multiple illicit drugs and dozens of fentanyl pills.⁹
- February 2018:** A six-month-long investigation dubbed “Operation High Hopes” brought down a major drug trafficking ring. Law enforcement seized multiple illicit drugs, including more than 15 kilograms of fentanyl, and arrested 37 individuals.¹⁰
- August 2017:** Federal agents busted a drug ring that was allegedly responsible for distributing “kilogram quantities” of fentanyl and heroin in the Cape Cod area. Agents also seized hundreds of counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl.¹¹
- March 2017:** U.S. postal inspectors seized an Ohio-bound package mailed from Falmouth that contained 1,500 fentanyl pills made to resemble oxycodone.¹²
- September 2016:** Salem Police warned residents that they had found counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl in the area.¹³
- June 2016:** Boston Police Department issued a public warning after finding fake oxycodone pills on the street containing fentanyl.¹⁴

PILL PRESS SEIZURES

- November 2019:** Two Brockton men were arrested after local police, with help from DEA and FBI, seized 5,700 grams of fentanyl powder and several pill presses from multiple locations.¹⁵
- March 2019:** 10,000 counterfeit Xanax pills and a pill press were items seized during a raid on a Stoughton office space. Three Brockton men in their 20s were indicted.¹⁶

BLACK MARKET AND COUNTERFEIT CANCER DRUGS

- April 2015:** The FDA sent warning letters to 12 Massachusetts doctors and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.¹⁷
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, including 10 doctors’ offices in Massachusetts, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.¹⁸

MISBRANDED AND COUNTERFEIT BOTOX

- March 2016:** 21 doctors' offices and practices in Massachusetts were among more than 1,227 doctors nationwide who received warning letters from the FDA to stop buying infusion drugs from TC Medical Group, which sold more than \$33 million worth of non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Botox.¹⁹
- July 2013:** The FDA warned eight doctors and medical practices in Massachusetts to stop purchasing fraudulent versions of Botox sold by Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox.²⁰
- November 2012:** Eight Massachusetts 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.²¹

OTHER COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

- March 2018:** A man received a 10-year prison sentence and three years probation for manufacturing and distributing counterfeit steroids bearing the name of Onyx Pharmaceuticals, a legitimate company that does not manufacture liquid steroids. A fellow conspirator received a year-long sentence.²²
- February 2018:** A Palmer man received a two-year prison sentence for importing misbranded prescription drugs from Pakistan and distributing them to customers around the United States. This case involved an assortment of drugs, including Ritalin, Percocet, hydrocodone, Adderall, and Restoril.²³

FOOTNOTES

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