

The Deadly Counterfeit Drug Trade Thrives in Louisiana

June 2017: A Metairie man was arrested after he tried to have carfentanil and 25 pills containing fentanyl mailed to him

The country has seen an upsurge in counterfeit prescription pills masquerading as painkillers and Xanax. 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.**

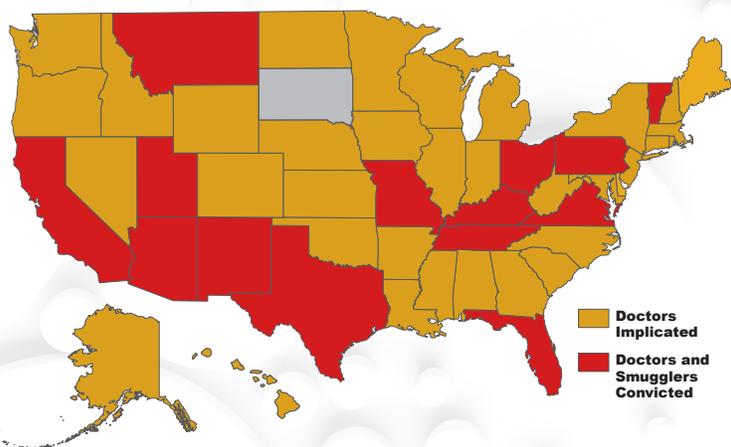
Fentanyl is a serious threat to Louisiana. In April 2017, police in Natchitoches warned the public about counterfeit pills made with fentanyl turning up in their town. Jesse Taitano, the Co-Commander of the Natchitoches Drug Task Force said, **“We’re letting people know that here in little Natchitoches, Louisiana we are starting to see things like what New Orleans is seeing, that Shreveport is seeing and it’s making its way here.”**

53 Louisiana Doctors Linked to Fake Drug Rings

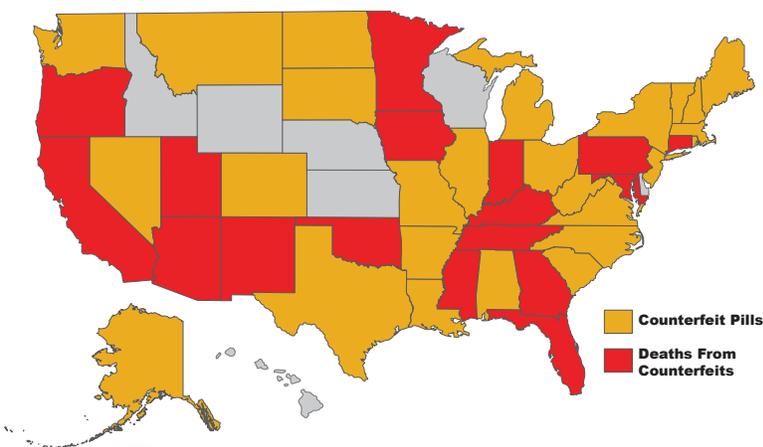
Counterfeit cancer drugs have touched Louisiana as well. 53 different medical practices in Louisiana have been implicated in various black market supply chains associated with counterfeit cancer treatments and other therapies. Families who have lost relatives to cancer will never know if their loved 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 Louisiana lives at risk of serious injury or death.

Fake Cancer Drug Crisis



Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeits & Related Deaths



Counterfeit and Black Market Drug Investigations in Louisiana (2009–2017)

Based on reported investigations.

Note that each investigation could have affected hundreds of Louisiana residents.

Fentanyl and Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

- October 2017:** Louisiana's Department of Health started an initiative to correct a flaw in how the cause of death is recorded in the state, causing an 84% increase in the reported number of people who died with heroin, fentanyl and prescription painkillers in their bodies in 2016.¹
- October 2017:** City leaders in New Orleans announced that law enforcement officers would begin to carry naloxone to help prevent fatal overdoses.²
- August 2016:** Lafayette law enforcement warned the people of both the city and the parish about fentanyl after 13 people had died from the drug so far in 2016.³
- June 2017:** Gabriel Blatty of Metairie was arrested following an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service that turned up 100mg of carfentanil and 25 pills containing fentanyl.⁴
- April 2017:** Law enforcement in Natchitoches warned members of the public that they had found counterfeit pills containing fentanyl in the area.⁵
- January 2017:** A student filmmaker at Louisiana State University reported in January 2018 that he had lost a friend—one of six college friends who had died of overdoses during his tenure at LSU—to a fentanyl overdose. He had seen the student the night before his death, taking Xanax in a bar.⁶
- November 2016:** A Utah-based drug counterfeiting operation shipped a buyer in Louisiana 100 fentanyl-laced counterfeit oxycodone pills.⁷

Black Market and Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

- April 2015:** The FDA warned three Louisiana medical practices and more than 270 nationwide to stop buying drugs from Gallant Pharmaceuticals, which sold more than 39 non-FDA approved medications.⁸
- May 2013:** The FDA warned 780 medical practices, 12 in Louisiana, to stop doing business with unlicensed drug seller Medical Device King, which had sold 31 non-FDA approved medications, including counterfeit Avastin.⁹

Misbranded and Counterfeit Botox

- March 2016:** The FDA warned 19 Louisiana 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.¹⁰
- July 2013:** The FDA warned eight Louisiana doctors and more than 230 nationwide to stop buying from Online Botox Pharmacy, Onlinebotox.com, and Onlinebotox because their products may be counterfeit and/or may be drugs from foreign or unknown sources that are not approved for distribution in the United States.¹¹

Other Drugs

- January 2017:** Two Louisiana men were sentenced in federal court for their roles as drop shippers for a Thailand-based fake online pharmacy.¹²
- March 2016:** A federal jury convicted Darlene Krueger of Destrehan of six felony offenses in connection with a scheme to sell illegal and mislabelled diet pills to victims throughout Louisiana. She sold the pills between 2009 and 2014 and claimed they were “all natural,” but knew they contained sibutramine. Sibutramine is a Schedule IV controlled substance with known harmful side effects.¹³

Footnotes

1. Matt Sledge, "True number of Louisiana opioid deaths? Initiative spikes 2016 total by 84 percent," *The New Orleans Advocate*, October 28, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2n3ZL9F>.
2. Jim Mustian, "Amid surge in overdose deaths, New Orleans police to carry naloxone, hailed as 'miracle drug'," *The New Orleans Advocate*, October 18, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2DAXMbW>.
3. "Lafayette law enforcement warns of deadly drug," *KATC 3*, August 5, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2GZik75>.
4. Michelle Hunter, "Metairie man booked with receiving drug 100X stronger than fentanyl," *nola.com*, updated June 13, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2DQrLrA>.
5. Nate Fluharty, "Law enforcement warn of dangerous drugs flooding local streets," *KTBS 3*, April 11, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2F7DuxY>.
6. Jerry Mitchell, "After 6 classmates' funerals, LSU student is making movie about drug overdoses," *Clarion Ledger*, February 5, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2E6OmQT>.
7. Superseding Indictment, U.S. District Court, District of Utah, Central Division, Case No. 2:16-cr-00631-DAK, <http://bit.ly/2mGXekE>.
8. "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>.
9. "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>.
10. "FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...", <http://bit.ly/2DqFh4c>.
11. "Historical Information: FDA Issues Letters to Doctors Who May Have Purchased...", <http://bit.ly/2rkvR5s>.
12. "Two Louisiana Men Sentenced for Roles in Online Pharmacy Scheme," U.S. Department of Justice Press Release, January 13, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2EoQaYk>.
13. "March 23, 2016: Federal Jury Convicts Destrehan Woman in Scheme to Sell Illegal and Mislabeled Diet Pills," U.S. Department of Justice Press Release, March 23, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2DEq5Ro>.