

# COUNTERFEIT FENTANYL

Arizona data trends, interdiction, and statewide prevention



## PREVENTION RESOURCE LINKS

[GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF YOUTH, FAITH AND FAMILY](#)

[ARIZONA SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION RESOURCE](#)

[ARIZONA HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA](#)

[ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES](#)

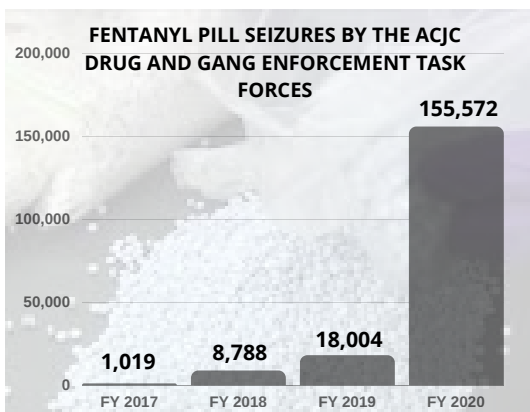
[SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMIN.](#)

## Know the Facts: Counterfeit Fentanyl in Arizona

Resources: National Institute on Drug Abuse and the AZ HIDTA

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is 100 times more potent. Counterfeit opioids, including fentanyl, are now the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths not only in the United States, but more specifically, in Arizona. Accessibility and lack of prevention education play a huge role in drug-use behaviors and fatal overdoses within Arizona.

Counterfeit fentanyl is smuggled into Arizona across the southwest border, primarily in powder and pill form. The Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area has indicated that **Synthetic Opioids (specifically fentanyl) is Arizona's #2 drug threat**. The data below represents Arizona specific trends:



DATA PROVIDED BY: AZ CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

- **Drug Arrests:** The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission indicated in **FY 2020, 91% of task force arrests were drug-related**. The task forces also **seized 4,192 lbs of fentanyl (5,012% increase from previous fiscal year) and 155,572 fentanyl pills (764% increase from previous fiscal year)**.
- **Interdiction:** Through the Arizona HIDTA task forces, there was a **490% increase in fentanyl pill seizures from FY 2018 to FY 2019**.

Arizona data trends continued:

- **Fatal Overdoses:** In Maricopa and Pima County, the **2nd highest number of overdose deaths in 2019 were attributed to fentanyl (577 fatal overdoses).**
- **Treatment:** Crossroads, Inc. indicated that of the **43% of all clients who tested positive for methamphetamine upon admission into treatment, 30% of those also tested positive for fentanyl, but self reported methamphetamine only.** This presents the unknown of illegal substances as many are mixed within one another without the user knowing.
- **Youth at Risk:** The Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) conducted an analysis of Pima County which found that **fentanyl is the 2nd highest in number of deaths of youth 15-17 years of age.** The AZ HIDTA has also found that **youth are accessing illegal substances through the social media platforms Snap Chat and Instagram.**

## Interdiction AND Prevention

Interdiction efforts in Arizona are imperative to preventing drug trafficking along the main highway corridors. Recent efforts include a traffic stop on the Loop 202 on August 9, 2020, where police recovered a total of **400,000 counterfeit fentanyl pills.** More recently, on November 13, 2020, Yuma Sector Border Patrol agents seized **over 1 pound of fentanyl pills** during a checkpoint inspection on Interstate 8. Although data shows an increase in arrests and seizures, unfortunately there is still a vast amount of counterfeit fentanyl getting into the hands of Arizona residents.



Prevention efforts are necessary to eliminate fentanyl from Arizona communities as it minimizes the demand and reduces the use of this illegal substance. Prevention and early intervention efforts not only minimize the demand and use of illegal substances but also promote informed decision-making and healthy behaviors. These efforts have a direct impact on decreasing the fatal overdose rates within the Arizona community.

## Recommendations for Arizona:

Members of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership provided agency specific data trends and have worked diligently to identify areas of need in prevention. **The goal is to maximize the substance use prevention efforts** of federal, state, and local law enforcement in partnership with other state agencies.

### Areas of need include:

- Statewide counterfeit fentanyl alert utilizing the business community and social media markets.
- Provide Naloxone to treatment facilities and increase accessibility to the community.
- Statewide campaign on counterfeit fentanyl awareness and education.
- Targeted campaign on counterfeit fentanyl resources with direct dissemination to parents and/or caregivers.

