



TIMOTHY J. CRUZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PLYMOUTH DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

MAIN OFFICE:
166 MAIN STREET
BROCKTON, MA 02301

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CONTACT: BETH STONE
(508) 584-8120

DEA WARNS THAT DRUG NETWORKS ARE FLOODING U.S. WITH LETHAL, COUNTERFEIT PILLS

BROCKTON – The Drug Enforcement Administration has issued a Public Safety Alert warning Americans of the alarming increase in the lethality and availability of phony prescription pills that contain Fentanyl and Methamphetamine.

The Public Safety Alert, issued on Monday, was the first time in six years that the DEA issued such a warning to raise awareness of a significant national surge in counterfeit pills. The DEA reports that the pills are being mass-produced by criminal drug networks in labs, and are deceptively marked as legitimate prescription pills.

These counterfeit pills have been seized by DEA in every U.S. state in unprecedented quantities. More than 9.5 million counterfeit pills were seized so far this year, which is more than the last two years combined. DEA laboratory testing reveals a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit pills containing at least two milligrams of fentanyl, which is considered a lethal dose. A deadly dose of fentanyl is small enough to fit on the tip of a pencil.

Counterfeit pills are illegally manufactured by criminal drug networks and are made to look like real prescription opioid medications such as Oxycodone, Percocet, Hydrocodone, and Xanax; or stimulants like Adderall. Fake prescription pills are widely accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms.

The DEA alert does not apply to legitimate pharmaceutical medications prescribed by medical professionals and dispensed by licensed pharmacists. The legitimate prescription supply chain is not impacted. Anyone filling a prescription at a licensed pharmacy can be confident that the medications they receive are safe when taken as directed by a medical professional.

“In Massachusetts, we saw about a 5% increase in overdose deaths from 2019 to 2020,” DA Cruz said. “In Plymouth County, overdose deaths increased by about 17% last year. Those statistics are people. I hope that Plymouth County residents are aware of this unprecedented warning by the DEA.”