



Spike in Overdoses in the Greater Kansas City Area Linked to Fentanyl

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(U) Overview

(U) Preliminary data from the Buchanan County Emergency Medical Services and the Buchanan County Health Department recorded 63 overdoses in the St. Joseph, Missouri/Buchanan County area in March 2021.¹ This is twice the number of drug overdoses reported for March 2020. According to both law enforcement and public health sources, nearly all of the overdoses are suspected to involve fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine.

(U) Details

(U) According to the Kansas City DEA Northland Task Force, counterfeit oxycodone “M 30” pills (see Figure 1) and powder heroin containing unknown amounts of fentanyl are responsible for the rash of overdoses. Law enforcement has identified local drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) with ties to several cities in and around the Kansas City metropolitan area of distributing these drugs. Investigators believe the source of supply for these local DTOs resides in Kansas City, MO. Counterfeit oxycodone pills and heroin containing fentanyl are also believed to be responsible for overdoses in Excelsior Springs, MO; Gladstone, MO; Kearney, MO; Liberty, MO; Platte City, MO; Riverside, MO; Atchison, KS; and Leavenworth, KS. Law enforcement sent samples of the seized counterfeit pills and heroin to a regional crime laboratory for analysis and are awaiting the results.

(U) Figure 1: Counterfeit oxycodone pills



Source: DEA

(U) Investigative reports from local law enforcement suggest the users purchasing drugs from the local DTOs were aware that they contained fentanyl. Information from both social media and investigative findings suggests these users gathered in groups to consume the drugs, while one or more individuals watched over the group with a supply of naloxone ready in the event of an overdose.

(U) Anyone with information relating to this investigation or to the aforementioned drug types may contact the Kansas City DEA Northland Task Force at Northland@Midwest-HIDTA.org.

¹ (U) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines an overdose as an injury to the body (poisoning) that happens when a drug is taken in excessive amounts. An overdose can be fatal or nonfatal.



(U) This product was prepared by the Midwest HIDTA Strategic Intelligence Program. Comments, questions, or requests for further information may be addressed to the Strategic Intelligence Program Coordinator at

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