

## OPIOID MONITORING INITIATIVE

**\*\*ALERT\*\***

### Teenagers and Young Adults Overdosing on Counterfeit Pills Containing Fentanyl

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLIC RELEASE\*\***

**TYPE:** Public Bulletin Alert / Situational Awareness

**DATE:** December 3, 2019

**SOURCES:** Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (AZ HIDTA)  
Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)  
National Institute on Drug Abuse  
Prescott Valley Police Department  
San Luis Police Department  
Tucson Police Department – Counter Narcotics Alliance  
Yavapai County Medical Examiner’s Office

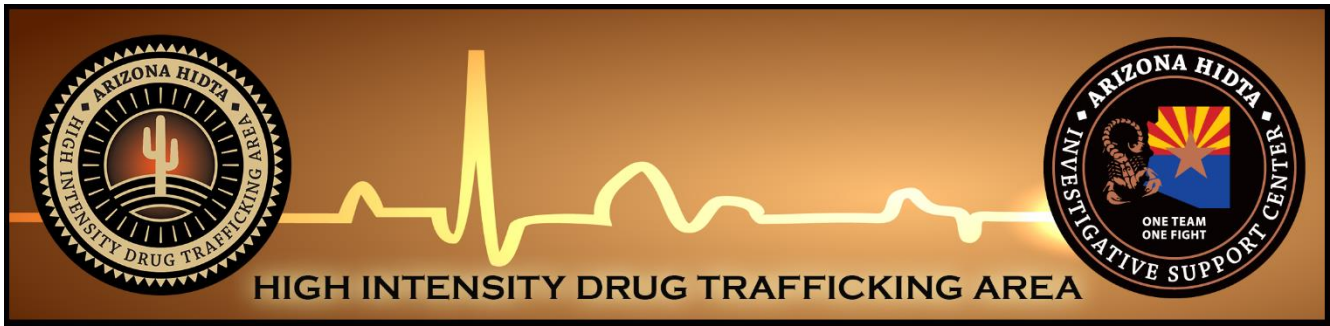
**ATTN:** Public

*This information is being shared with the public for situational awareness and safety purposes.*

In Arizona, teenagers and young adults are overdosing on counterfeit pills disguised as oxycodone containing fentanyl. On February 7, 2019, the Scottsdale Police Department detained a 16-year-old student who allegedly provided a counterfeit pill of M-30 to a fellow 17-year-old student who overdosed. Fortunately, first responders were able to determine the patient’s symptoms were consistent with an opioid overdose and were able to save the patient’s life.

The San Luis Police Department has seen an increase in their community of teenagers/high school students overdosing on counterfeit pills such as M-30s. In the first quarter of this year alone, the San Luis Fire Department responded to 16 suspected drug overdoses. Among the patients were teenagers, one of which involved a fatal drug overdose of a 17-year-old who had taken counterfeit pills containing fentanyl.

For more information, please contact the AZ Opioid Monitoring Initiative at [omi@azhidta.org](mailto:omi@azhidta.org).



In Yavapai County, the Prescott Valley Police Department and Yavapai County Medical Examiner’s Office reported two 19-year-olds had died of a fatal drug overdose involving counterfeit pills which also contained fentanyl.

In 2018, at a Halloween party, the Tucson Police Department reported a 19-year-old had fatally overdosed on a counterfeit pill known as “Mexican Oxy” which contained fentanyl. Three other individuals at the party also took the counterfeit pills and were fortunately saved with the administration of naloxone by law enforcement. According to law enforcement, the four individuals thought they were taking oxycodone. In addition, in December 2018, a college student from the University of Arizona fatally overdosed on fentanyl.

According to the DEA, fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid drug approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin as an analgesic. According to the CDC, approximately 68% of the reported 70,237 drug overdose deaths in 2017 involved an opioid (including prescription opioids, illegal opioids such as heroin, and illicitly manufactured fentanyl).

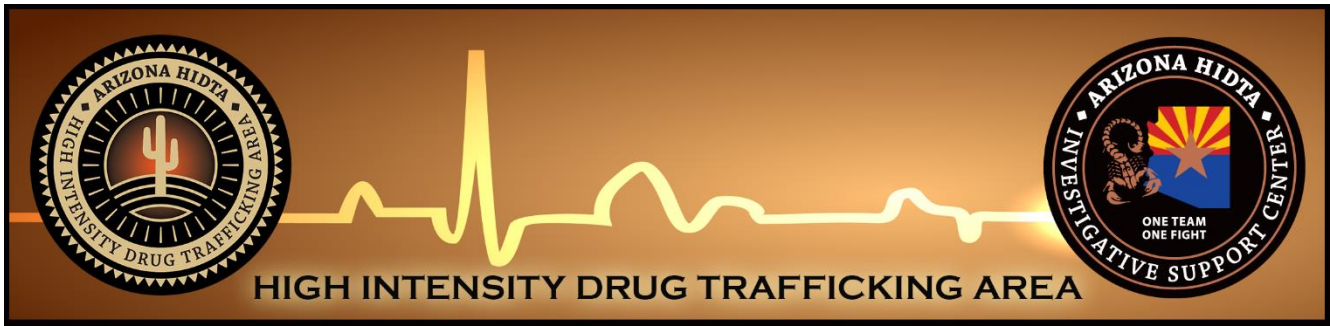
The chart below helps provide a perspective of the types of drugs youth and young adults are abusing and overdosing on. Between 2017 and 2019, fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, methadone, and marijuana are in the top most common drugs involved in opioid-related fatal and non-fatal overdoses among teenagers and young adults. According to ADHS, many of the overdose cases in Arizona involve more than one drug, including more than one opioid.

### 2017 - 2019 Drug Types Involved in Arizona Opioid Overdoses Regarding Teenagers and Young Adults

| Drug Type Involved | Opioid-Involved Overdoses Age Group 0 - 14 years | Opioid-Involved Overdoses Age Group 15 - 17 years | Opioid-Involved Overdoses Age Group 18 - 24 years |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| Benzodiazepine     | 0%   | 3%  | 17%   |
| Cocaine            | 0%   | 5%  | 25%   |
| Fentanyl           | 1%   | 7%  | 28%   |
| Heroin             | 0%   | 0%  | 17%   |
| Hydrocodone        | 0%   | 6%  | 9%  |
| Marijuana          | 1%   | 7%  | 23%   |
| Methadone          | 3%   | 8%  | 18%   |
| Methamphetamine    | 0%   | 9%  | 20%   |
| Morphine           | 0%   | 1%  | 4%  |
| Other Rx Opiate    | 2%   | 3%  | 12%   |
| Oxycodone          | 1%   | 4%  | 15%   |
| Tramadol           | 2%   | 4%  | 7%  |

Source: ADHS, June 15, 2017 – November 8, 2019; 2018 and 2019 provisional data included and subject to change.

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**Analyst Note:** This chart represents the types of drugs involved with opioids in fatal and non-fatal overdoses, and each percentage includes a positive result in each of those drug categories associated with an overdose. For example, one person may have had methamphetamine, heroin, and marijuana in their system, so for that overdose, all three drugs would be calculated for each specific drug noted.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, naloxone is a medication designed to rapidly reverse an opioid overdose. It is an opioid antagonist which binds to opioid receptors to help reverse and block the effects of other opioids. Naloxone administration can be life-saving. It can quickly restore normal respiration to a person whose breathing has slowed or stopped from an opioid overdose, including heroin and prescription opioid pain medications. For more information regarding Naloxone access/training, please go to [ADHS – Naloxone](#).

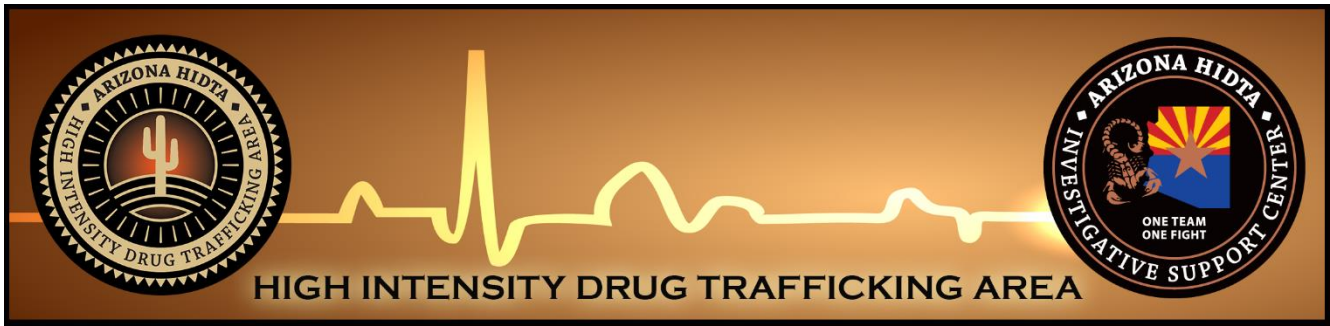
The universal message law enforcement wants to convey to their communities is the importance of parents talking to their kids about the dangers of drugs, including counterfeit pills. To learn more about the dangerous effects of drug abuse and on how to talk to your kids, please go to [AZ HIDTA – Resource Center](#).

24/7 treatment is available for those struggling with opioid use disorder. There are six Arizona Opioid Treatment Centers of Excellence. The centers are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide immediate access to opioid treatment services. The 24/7 centers serve AHCCCS members, individuals with no insurance, and individuals with insurance that may not cover some services like Medication Assisted Treatment or Peer Support Services. Please see the attached bulletin, and feel free to share with your community.

In addition, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) recently unveiled a national substance abuse treatment locator. The tool, which can be found at [FindTreatment.gov](#), allows people to find substance abuse treatment for themselves or others.

Below are some examples of the M-30 counterfeit pills. They are not the actual drugs seized related to incidents noted in this bulletin.

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**Photo Credit:** Tucson Police Department Crime Laboratory  
 Photos provided for informational purposes, not actual tablets seized in related stories in this bulletin.



**Photo Credit:** Tucson Police Department Crime Laboratory



**Counterfeit "M-30"  
 Oxycodone pills containing  
 Fentanyl**

Photo provided for informational purposes, not actual tablets seized in related stories in this bulletin.

**Opioid Monitoring Initiative Partners**



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Arizona Opioid Monitoring Initiative (OMI)

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