



**DEA**

# ***Fake Pills, Illicit Fentanyl, and Other Emerging Drug Threats***

Rich Lucey

Senior Prevention Program Manager  
Drug Enforcement Administration

**National Prevention Specialist Conference  
October 4, 2023**



# DEA

The drug overdose crisis is a clear and present **public safety, public health, and national security threat.**

**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**



# DEA

HEALTH

## **'Don't do it': Increase in overdose deaths prompts DEA warning about fake pills**

North Idaho teenagers overdosing on fentanyl as counterfeit pills circulate

## **OPD releases image of dangerous counterfeit pills circulating in the metro**

Counterfeit Oxycodone linked to several deaths

Counterfeit fentanyl pills spark cluster of overdoses in Georgia

Drug overdoses skyrocket in Washington state amid **COVID-19** pandemic

**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**



# DEA

## Overdose Deaths



**> 110,000**

**Drug overdose deaths over  
the last year**

Approximately **2/3** involved  
synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl

Approximately **1/3** involved  
psychostimulants, primarily  
methamphetamine

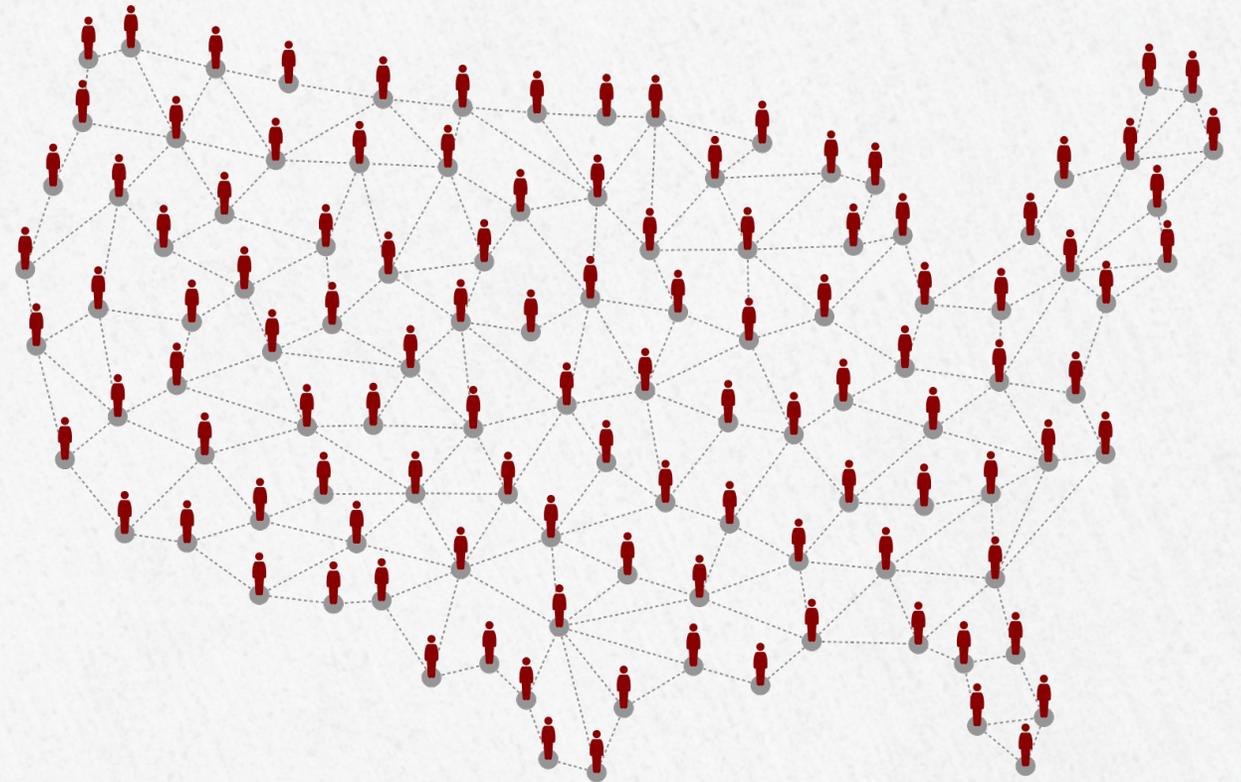
**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



# DEA

The record quantities of fentanyl that DEA seized in 2022 are enough to **kill every American.**



**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**

Potentially Lethal  
Dose of Fentanyl



DEA



**DEA**

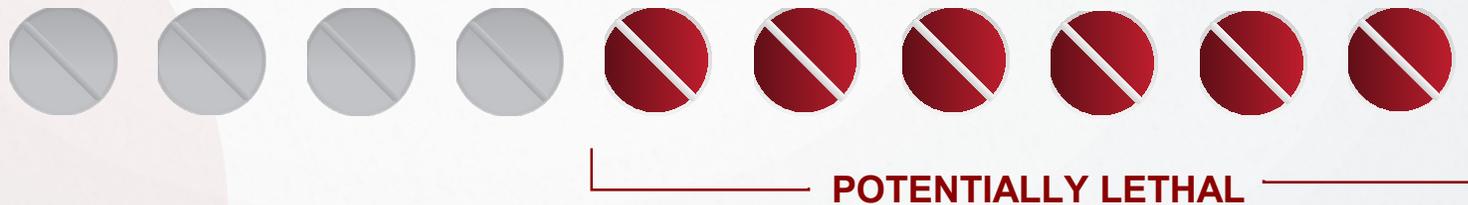


**PUBLIC SAFETY ALERT**

**ONE  
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KILL**

## LETHAL DOSES OF FENTANYL FOUND IN FAKE PILLS

DEA reports a dramatic rise in the number of fake pills containing at least 2mg of fentanyl – what is considered a lethal dose

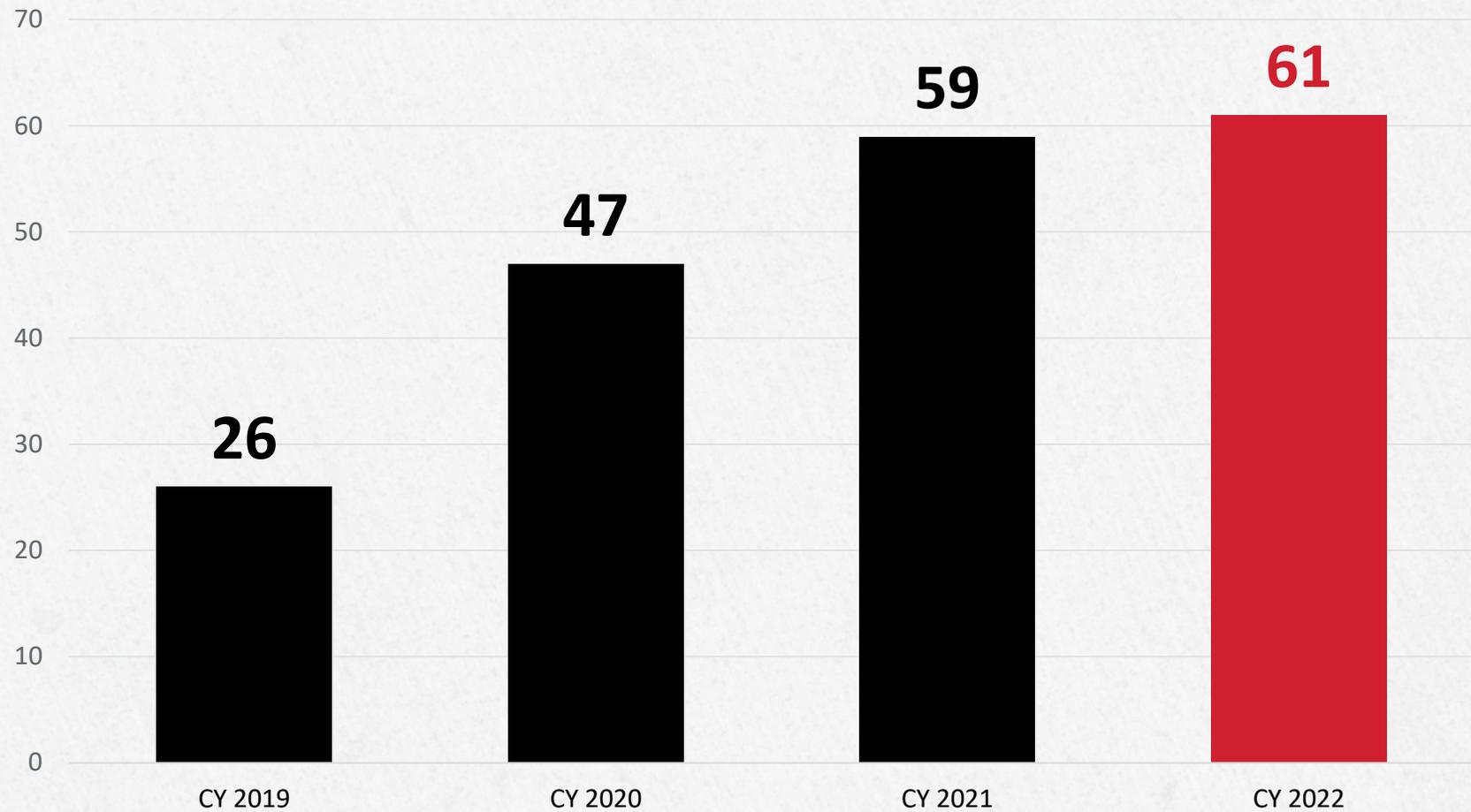


Today **6 out of ten DEA-tested pills** with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose.



# DEA

## Percentage of Tablets Containing 2 mg or More of Fentanyl CY 2019–CY 2022



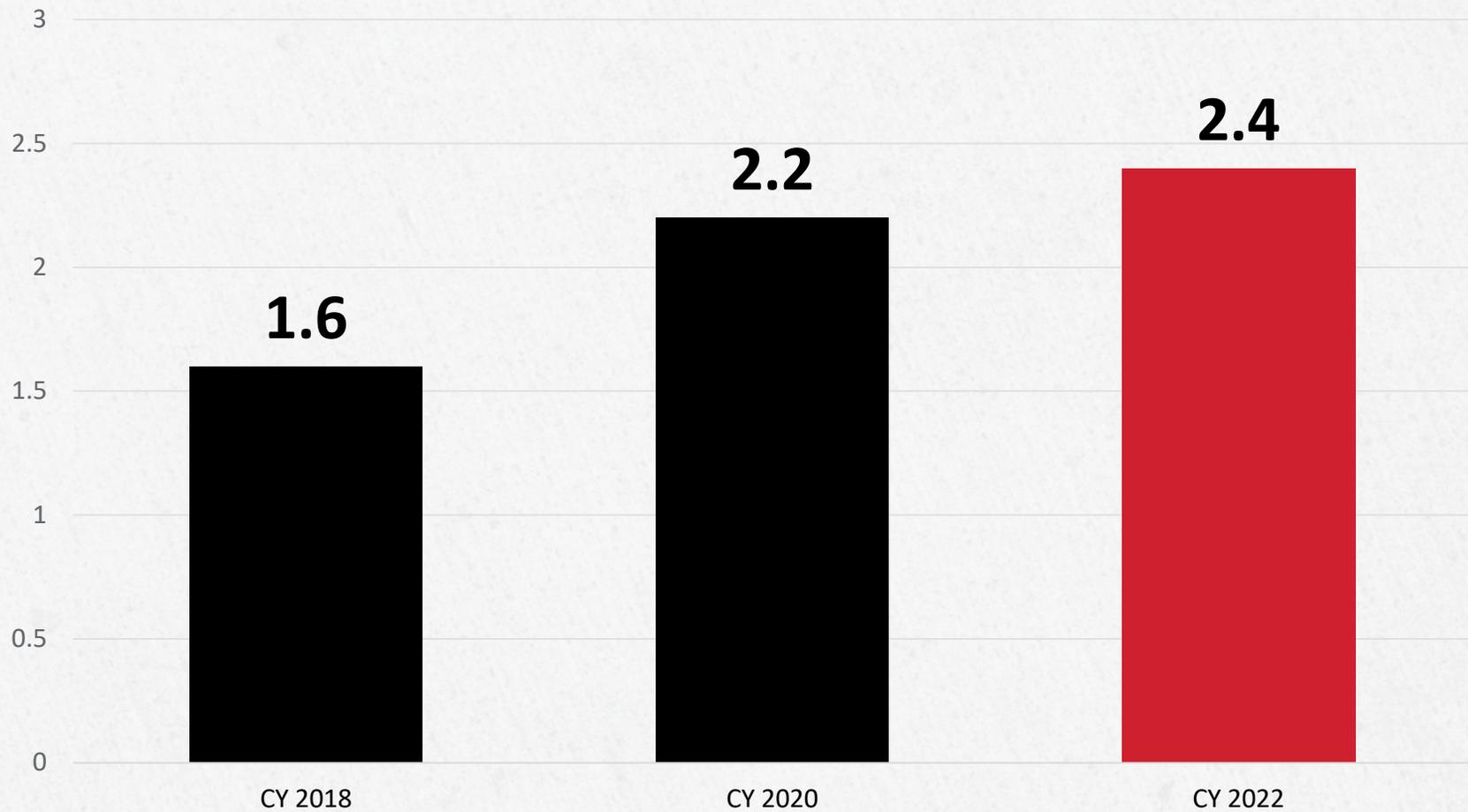
**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**

Source: DEA Advanced Information on Drugs Dashboard, November 2022



# DEA

## Average Fentanyl Dose in Tablets (mg/tablet) CY 2018–CY 2022



**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**

Source: DEA Advanced Information on Drugs Dashboard, November 2022

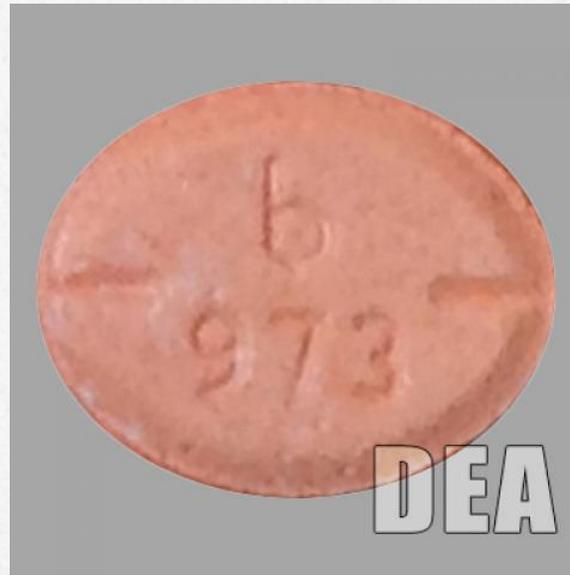


# DEA

## Most Common Fake Pills



Oxycontin®



Adderall®



Xanax®

**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**



# DEA

## Authentic Oxycodone



## Fake Oxycodone



**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**



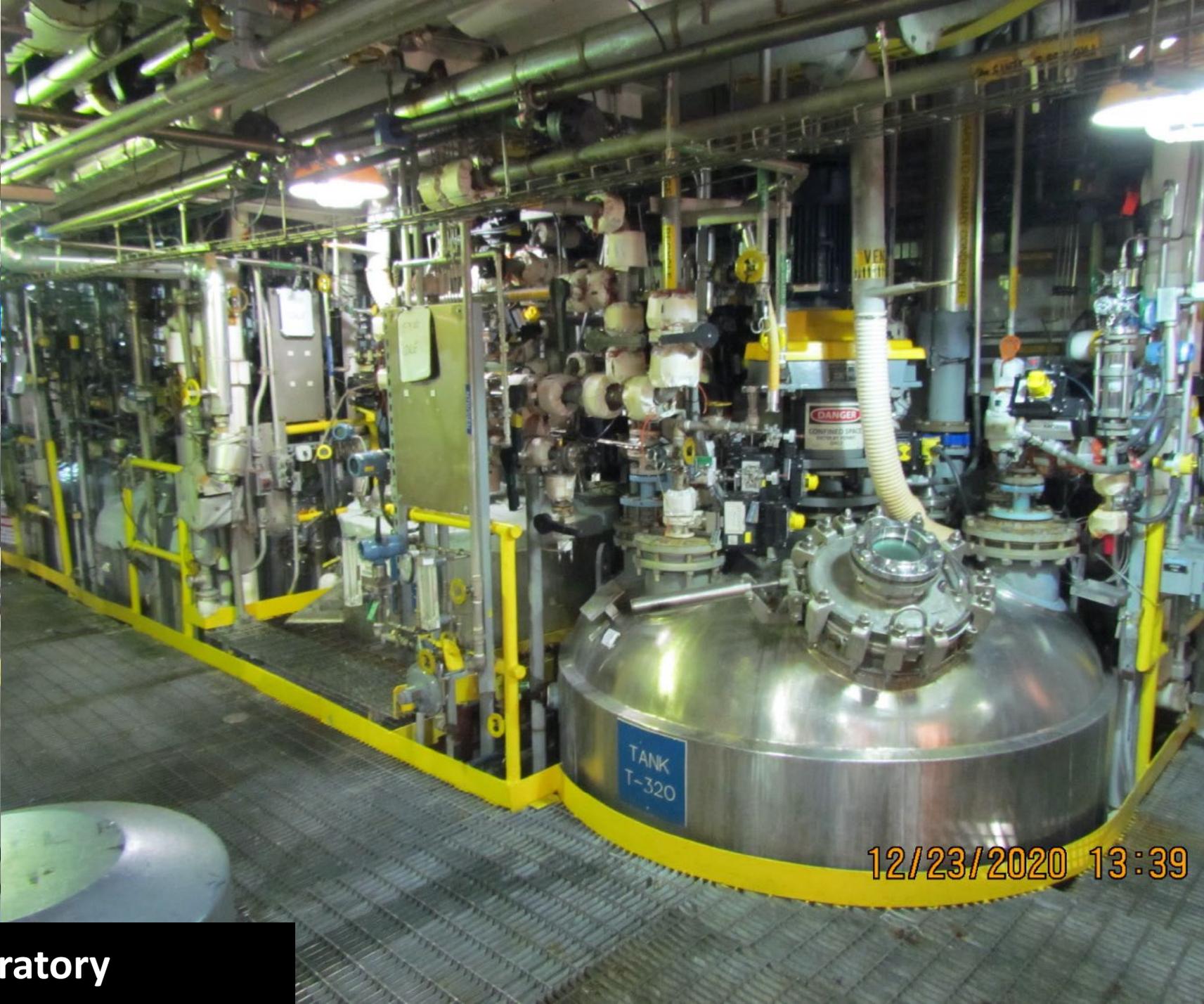
# DEA

**Authentic Xanax**

**Fake Xanax**



**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**



12/23/2020 13:39

Medical grade fentanyl laboratory



**Illicit fentanyl laboratory**



# DEA



## Additional Threat: Access

Fake Rx pills are easily accessible & often sold on social media & e-commerce platforms; available to anyone with a smartphone.



# Narcotics Distribution



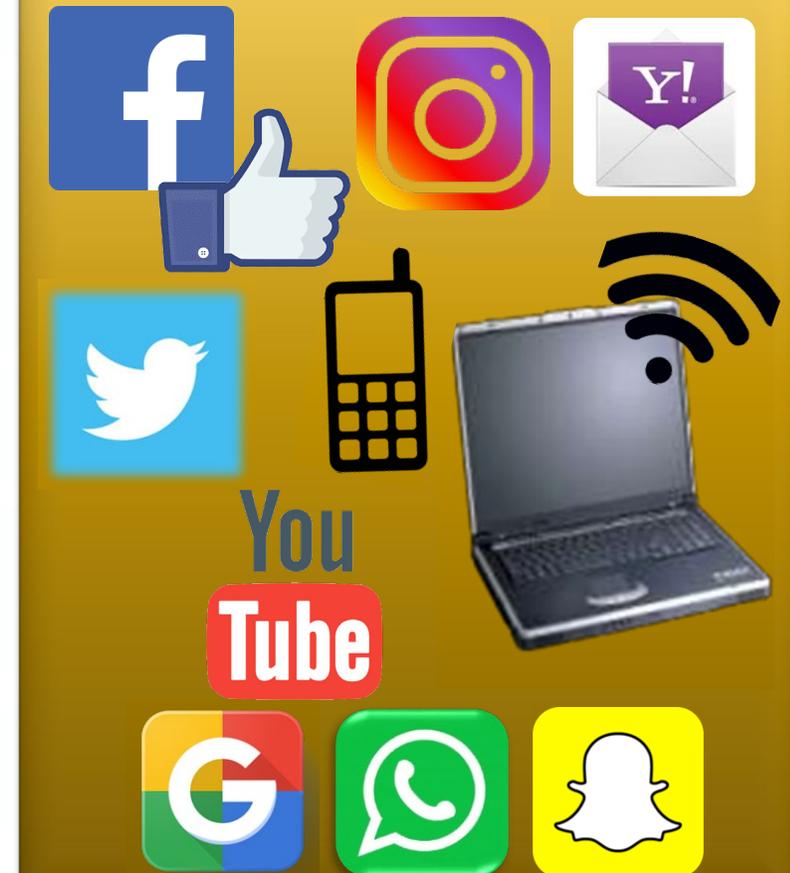
## Payment Methods



## Delivery Services



## Online Persona





# DEA

## | Oxycodone



## Popular Emoji Drug Codes



## | Xanax®



## | Percocet®



## | Adderall®



## Additional Threat: Access

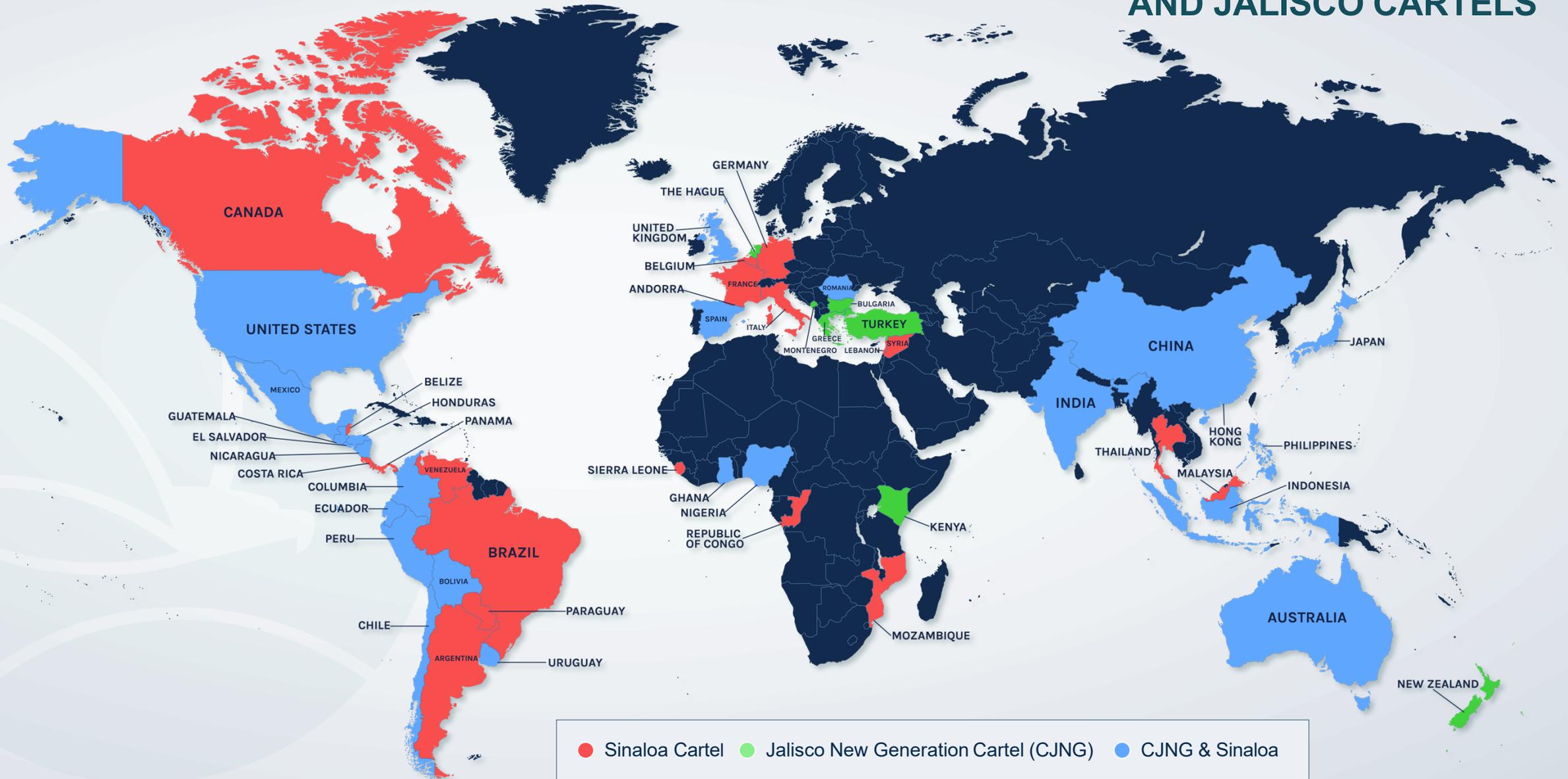
Monitoring for suspicious text messages on social media or cash app posts could spark an important, and potentially life-saving, conversation.

**ONE  
PILL CAN  
KILL**

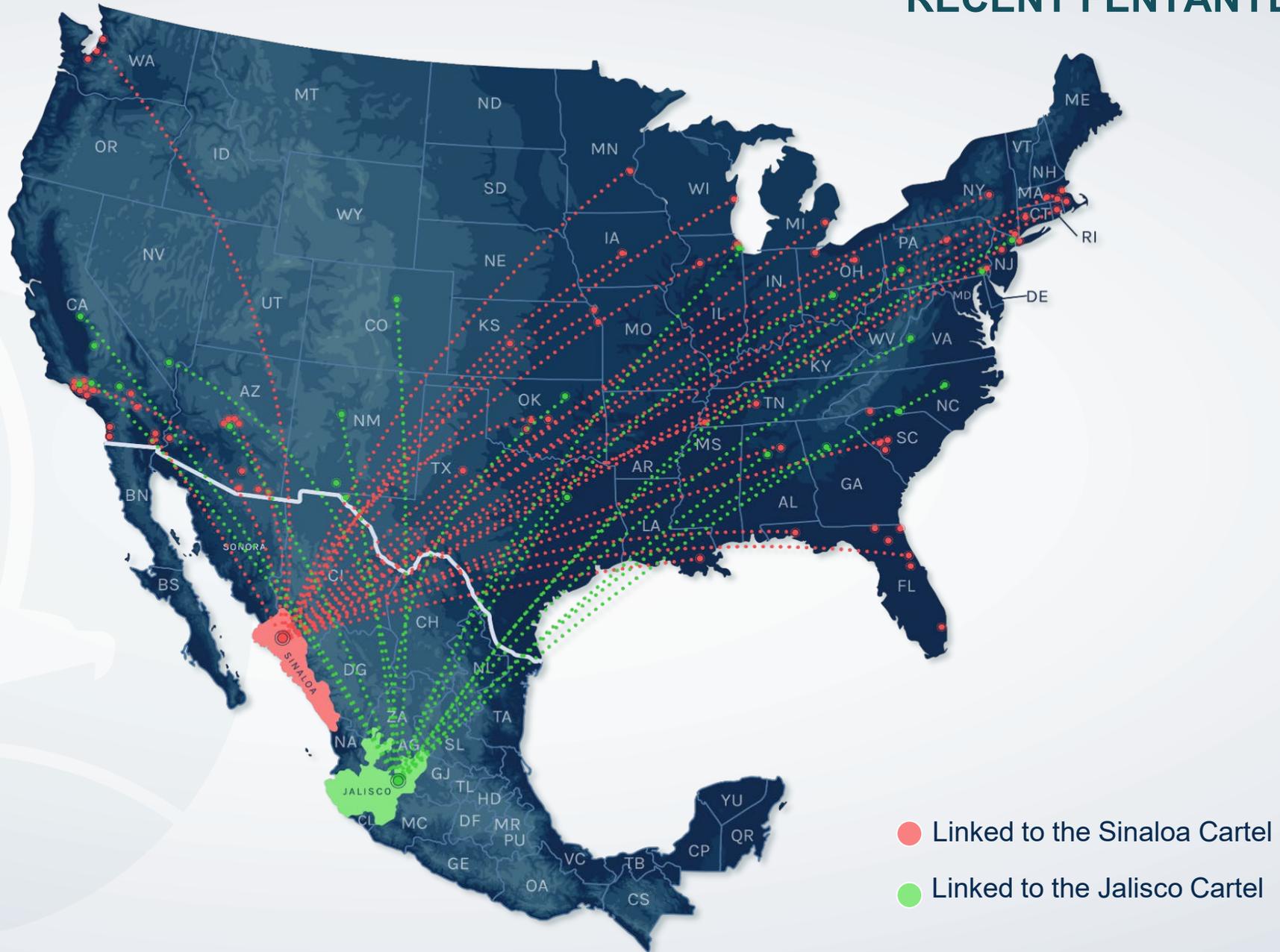
# JALISCO AND SINALOA AREAS OF DOMINANT INFLUENCE



# GLOBAL INFLUENCE OF THE SINALOA AND JALISCO CARTELS

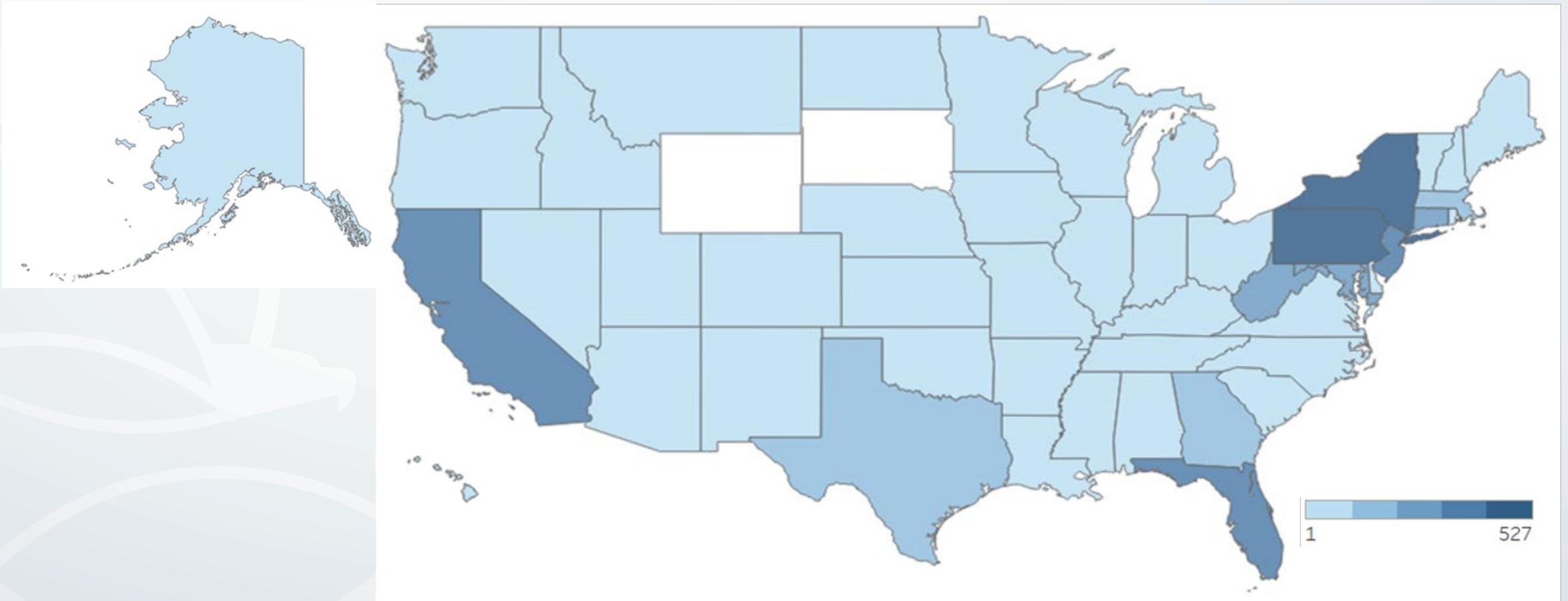


# RECENT FENTANYL SEIZURES



## XYLAZINE AND FENTANYL

In 2022, approximately 23% of the fentanyl powder exhibits contained xylazine.





# DEA

## Xylazine – DEA Resources

**The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs**  
 DEA Joint Intelligence Report  
 OCTOBER 2022

U.S. Department of Justice  
 Drug Enforcement Administration

DEA-DCI-DIR-001-23  
 Unclassified

**Drug Enforcement Administration**  
 Diversion Control Division  
 Drug & Chemical Evaluation Section

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**Xylazine**  
 (Trade Names: Rompun®, AnaSed®; Street Names: Tranq)

May 2023

**Introduction:**

**User Population:**

Xylazine is a substance that is in approved drugs used in veterinary medicine as a sedative with analgesic and muscle relaxant properties. Xylazine was first synthesized in 1962 by Bayer Pharmaceuticals and was investigated for potential human use in clinical trials as an analgesic, sleeping aid, an anesthetic. However, these trials were terminated due to its severe hypotension and central nervous system (CNS) depressant effects.

Although xylazine is not approved for human use, the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) notes exposure to xylazine is

There has been an increase in the number of reports, alerts, and advisories from media and public health agencies indicating that xylazine is being abused in combination with other drugs of abuse, such as fentanyl, and is causing harm.

**PUBLIC SAFETY ALERT**

**Licit Uses:**

**DEA Reports Widespread Threat of Fentanyl Mixed with Xylazine**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved specific products containing xylazine for veterinary use only. Approved drugs for veterinary use are available as 20 mg/ml and 100 mg/ml injectable solution. Typically, the approved drugs are administered in animals either alone or in conjunction with other anesthetics (e.g., ketamine or barbiturates) intravenously or intramuscularly.

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration is warning the American public of a sharp increase in the trafficking of fentanyl mixed with xylazine. Xylazine, also known as "Tranq," is a powerful sedative that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved for veterinary use.

**Chemistry:**

"Xylazine is making the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced, fentanyl, even deadlier," said Administrator Milgram. "DEA has seized xylazine and fentanyl mixtures in 48 of 50 States. The DEA Laboratory System is reporting that in 2022 approximately 23% of fentanyl powder and 7% of fentanyl pills seized by the DEA contained xylazine."

The chemical structure of xylazine is shown below.

Xylazine and fentanyl drug mixtures place users at a higher risk of suffering a fatal drug poisoning. Because xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone (Narcan) does not reverse its effects. Still, experts always recommend administering naloxone if someone might be suffering a drug poisoning. People who inject drug mixtures containing xylazine also can develop severe wounds, including necrosis — the rotting of human tissue — that may lead to amputation.

xylazine has been used in drug-facilitated crimes to induce sleep. Advisories and alerts regarding the dangers of xylazine use have been issued by multiple public health departments and poison control centers.

**ONE**  
**PILL** CAN  
**KILL**



[www.dea.gov/onepill](http://www.dea.gov/onepill)



# DEA



## One Pill Can Kill – Awareness Campaign

### Goal:

Create healthier and safer communities by driving down overdose deaths

### Opportunities:

- ✓ Educate general public about dangers associated with fake pills
- ✓ Connect people with information and resources
- ✓ Encourage people to only use medications prescribed to them
- ✓ Remind people to protect themselves from diversion

### [www.dea.gov/onepill](http://www.dea.gov/onepill)

- ✓ Toolbox: Public Safety Alert, Fact Sheets, Graphics, Social Media



# DEA

## One Pill Can Kill – Awareness Campaign

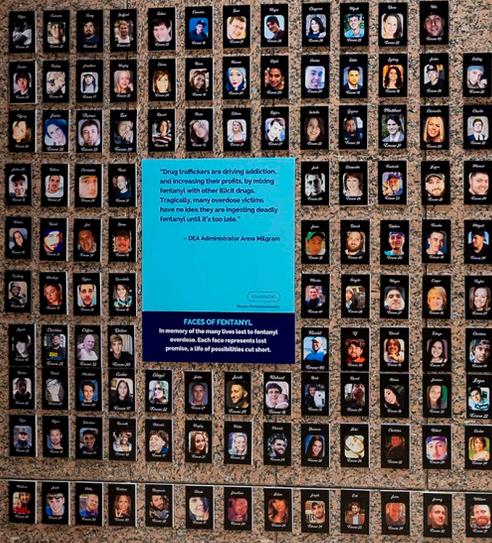


**DEA's Message to the Public:  
Know the dangers and accessibility  
of deadly drugs online.**

- Never take medicine that wasn't prescribed to you by your own doctor.
- Talk to your family and friends about the danger of buying drugs online.
- Spread the word that One Pill Can Kill.

**[www.dea.gov/onepill](http://www.dea.gov/onepill)**

# The Faces of Fentanyl



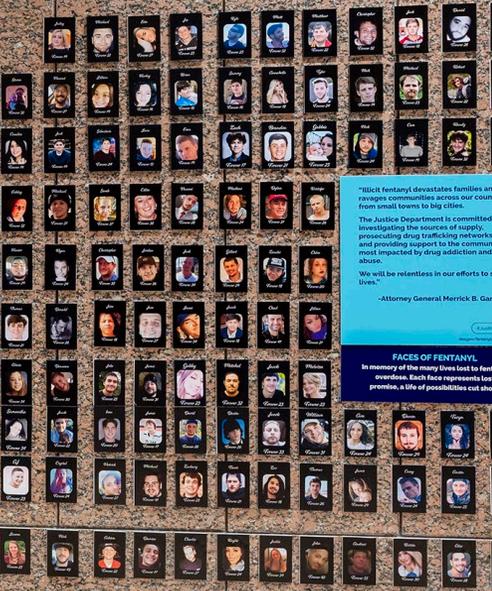
**MAY 10**  
NATIONAL  
FENTANYL  
AWARENESS  
DAY

**FACING  
FENTANYL**  
Memorial of Fentanyl Day  
AUGUST 21, 2022

"Drug traffickers are driving addiction and increasing their profits, by mixing fentanyl with other 'kick' drugs. Tragically, many overdose victims have no idea they are ingesting deadly fentanyl until it's too late."  
— DEA Administrator Anne Milgram

**FACES OF FENTANYL**  
In memory of the many lives lost to fentanyl overdose. Each face represents lost promise, a life of possibilities cut short.

Fentanyl is the deadliest drug threat facing our country. It is driving the overdose epidemic, poisoning families, and changing lives of young women in our communities.  
Fentanyl is insidious. It has found its way into every community, state, and territory of the United States. It is often hidden in plain sight and other household items, unsuspecting victims.  
Let these illegitimate drug producers be held accountable. What does our justice system look like on the lips of parents?  
In 2022 alone, nearly 100,000 people died of drug overdoses. The vast majority of those overdose deaths involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl.  
The faces you see before you represent only a fraction of the devastation and heartache that has been brought to families. Let their stories drive us to do all we can to save lives and prevent the tragedy from repeating.  
**Know No Place, Spread No Word.** Get information from trusted sources and share conversations with family and friends. Together we can save lives and make our communities safer and healthier.



"Fentanyl devastates families and ravages communities across our country—from small towns to big cities. The Justice Department is committed to investigating the sources of supply, prosecuting drug trafficking networks, and providing support to the communities most impacted by drug addiction and abuse. We will be relentless in our efforts to save lives."  
— Attorney General Merrick B. Garland

**FACES OF FENTANYL**  
In memory of the many lives lost to fentanyl overdose. Each face represents lost promise, a life of possibilities cut short.



# 2022 San Diego County Record Meth Seizure



On **July 7, 2022**, DEA San Ysidro in partnership with other federal, state and local agencies, seized approximately **5,004 pounds of methamphetamine** wrapped in 148 bundles contained in cardboard boxes. Agents were notified a box truck was pending entry into the United States at the Otay Mesa port. This vehicle had been placed into lookout because it was associated with the seizure of **2,012 pounds of methamphetamine** on **May 12, 2022**.



# 2022 Methamphetamine Lab Seizure



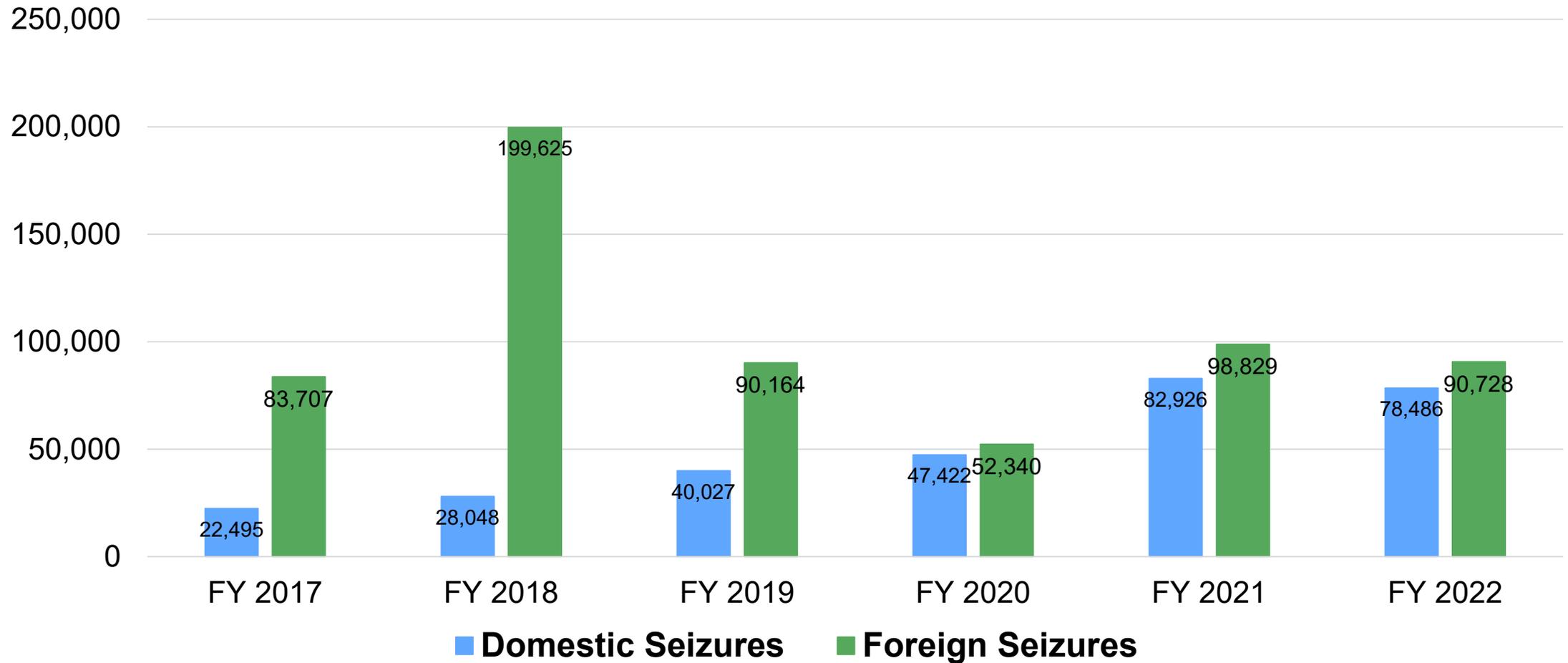
On **October 12, 2022**, a federal search warrant was served in **Tulare County California**. The enforcement operation resulted in the seizure of approximately **1,000 pounds of methamphetamine** and a fully operational methamphetamine conversion lab connected to Sinaloa Cartel members.



# Methamphetamine & Crystal Meth Seizures



(Fiscal Year Drug Seizure Amounts in Kilograms)



# 2022 Seizure of Tableting Operation



On **November 2, 2022**, investigators served five search warrants in **Los Angeles County** resulting in the seizure of six pill press machines.



Rainbow Colored Pills



Fake Adderall 30 Pills

Law Enforcement Sensitive





# DEA

## Marijuana



- Most commonly used illicit drug in the United States
- Readily available throughout the nation
- Grown on public lands to the detriment of the local environment and water supply
- National legal landscape is constantly evolving
- Mexico is the primary source of foreign marijuana
- DTOs (Cuba) establishing a presence in Colorado



**More on Top Drug Threats**

**Visit [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)**



# DEA Prevention Support Resources



# Resource: Websites



For Parents, Educators, and Caregivers



For Teens

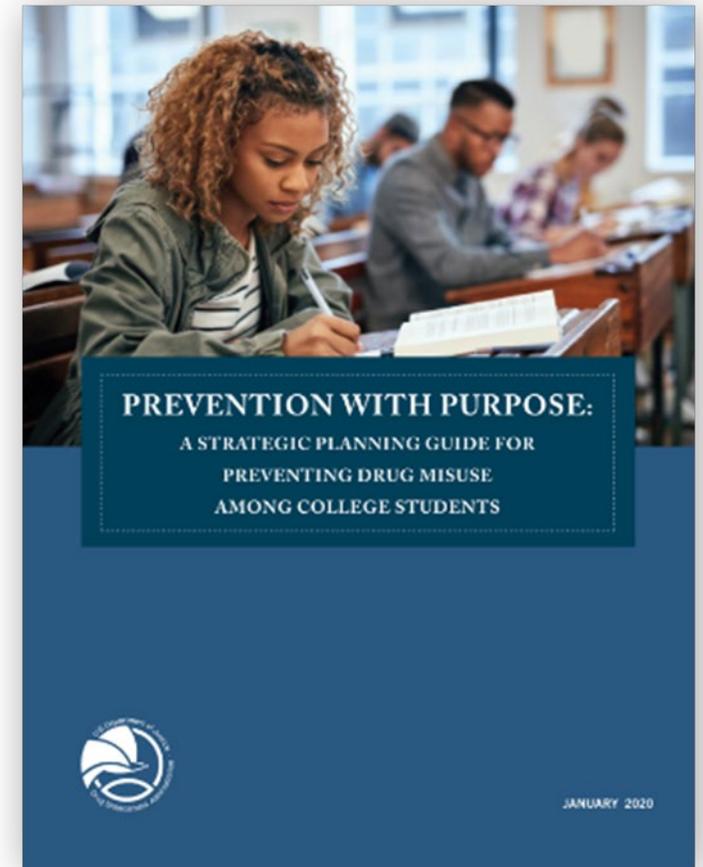
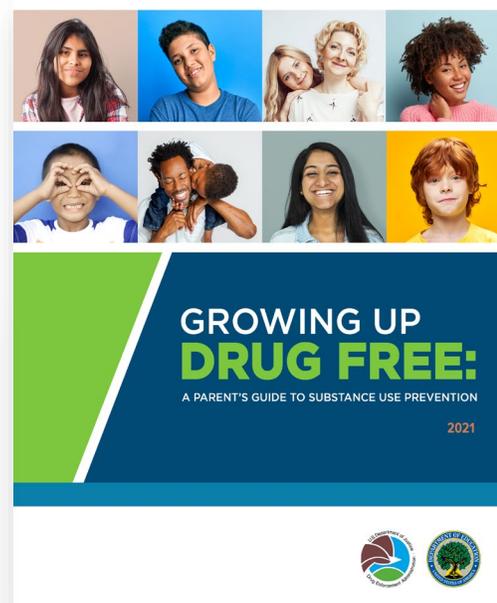
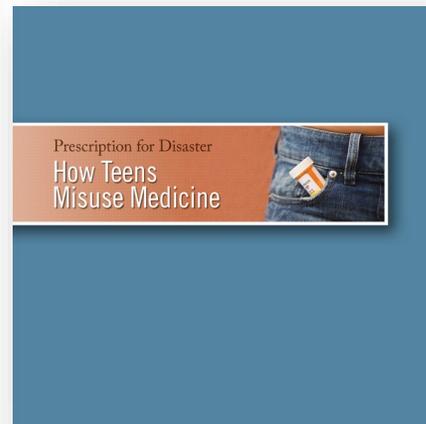
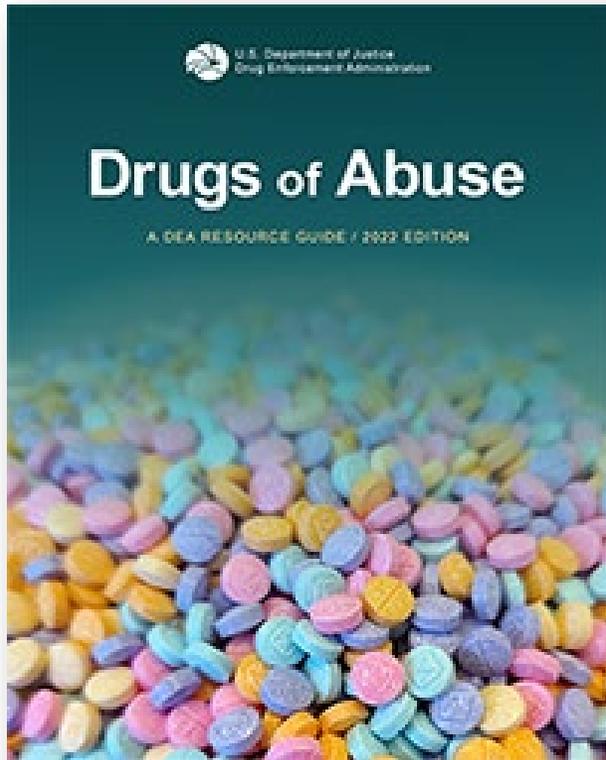


For Teachers  
For the Workplace



For Higher Education

# Resource: Publications



Download at: [getsmartaboutdrugs.com/publications](https://getsmartaboutdrugs.com/publications)



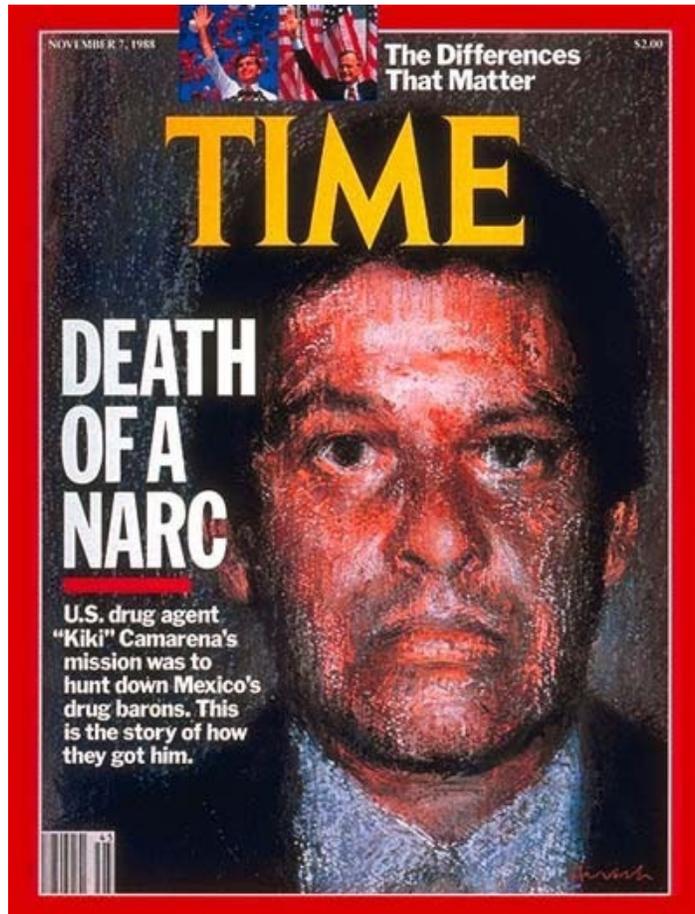
## Field Divisions for 2023 Deployment (11)



- Albuquerque
- Kalamazoo
- Kansas City
- Los Angeles
- Miami
- Manchester, NH
- New Orleans
- Philadelphia
- Phoenix
- Spokane
- Washington, DC



# Resource: Red Ribbon



Red Ribbon Week – October 23 – 31  
[www.dea.gov/redribbon](http://www.dea.gov/redribbon)



## Go Red for Red Ribbon!

- **What:** Support Red Ribbon Week
- **When:** October 1-31, 2023
- **Who:** Communities and businesses
- **How:** Light up local buildings, landmarks, bridges, and/or monuments in red. Post photos to social media; tag DEA.





[www.deatakeback.com](http://www.deatakeback.com)

**October 28, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (local time)**

# Resource: DEA Museum



[www.deamuseum.org](http://www.deamuseum.org)

# Resource: DEA Offices



## DEA Domestic Offices & Regions

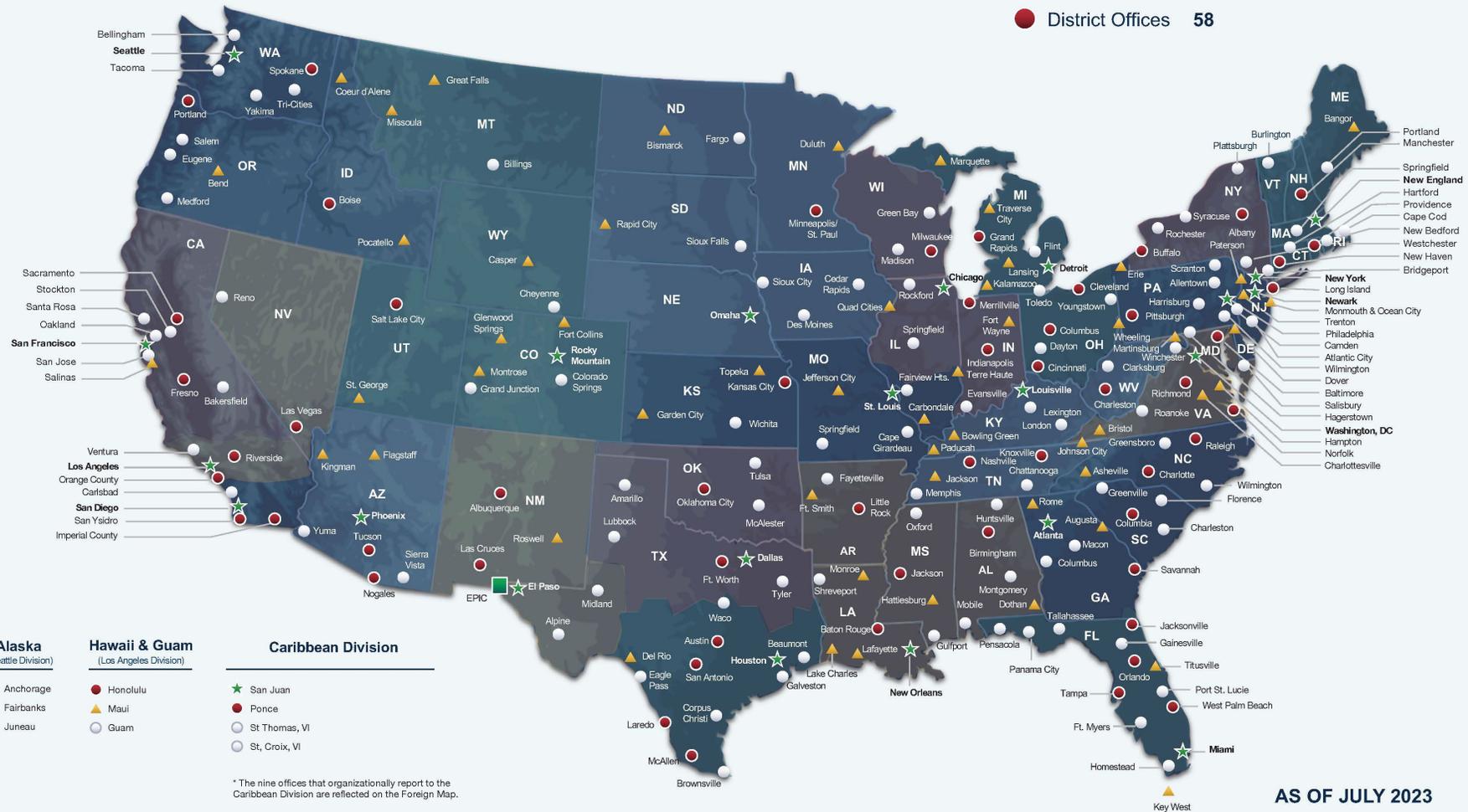
241 Domestic Offices

Resident Offices 102

Field Divisions 23

Posts of Duty 58

District Offices 58





**DEA**

# Contact Information

Rich Lucey

Senior Prevention Program Manager

Drug Enforcement Administration

Community Outreach and Prevention Support Section

[richard.lucey@dea.gov](mailto:richard.lucey@dea.gov)

Mainline phone number: (202) 307-7936