



**CDPH Drug Overdose Health Alert:
Fentanyl-Contaminated Street Norco®**

April 14, 2016

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued a Drug Overdose Health Alert on April 8, 2016 entitled “*Fentanyl-Contaminated Street Norco®*”. This alert describes the recent report of 48 overdoses and at least 10 deaths over a 10-day period in Sacramento County that appear to be associated with the consumption of a counterfeit version of the prescription drug Norco® (acetaminophen and hydrocodone) contaminated with fentanyl. CDPH is requesting that all health care facilities report suspected and confirmed fentanyl overdoses to local health departments.

In Los Angeles County, there has been a concerning increase in reported fentanyl-related deaths. While there were on average 40 fentanyl-related deaths reported each year from 2011-2013, there were 62 reported deaths in 2014. Though 2015 data is not yet available, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC DPH) is concerned about a further increase in deaths due to the lethality of fentanyl and reports that it is being found in street drugs and in counterfeit prescription drugs. The recent deaths in Sacramento County have further enhanced this concern. LAC DPH encourages health care facilities and providers to report all suspected and confirmed fentanyl overdoses.

Reporting Suspected or Confirmed Fentanyl Overdose Cases:

In Los Angeles County- reports should include:

- Patient name
- Date of birth
- Age
- Address of residence of patient
- Name and contact information of individual initiating report

Please send reports to:

Office of the Medical Director and Science Officer
Substance Abuse Prevention and Control
County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health
1000 S. Fremont Ave; Bldg A-9 East, 3rd Floor, Alhambra, CA 91803
Fax: 626-299-3591 Phone: 626-299-3504

In the Cities of Long Beach or Pasadena, please contact their local health departments:

- City of Long Beach Health Department: 562-570-4302
- City of Pasadena Public Health Department: 626-744-6043

Please see the full CDPH alert below.

To view all LAHAN communications in pdf format or to sign-up to receive LAHANs, please visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/lahan>



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Director and State Public Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

**DRUG OVERDOSE HEALTH ALERT:
Fentanyl-Contaminated Street Norco®
April 8, 2016**

Situational Update

Sacramento County health officials recently reported 48 overdoses of illicitly obtained drugs and at least 10 deaths over a 10-day period. It is suspected that these overdoses and deaths were the result of consumption of an opioid drug that strongly resembles the prescription opioid drug Norco®, but actually contained an undetermined amount of fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opiate analgesic much more potent than morphine. CDPH is receiving anecdotal reports that similar overdoses and/or deaths, potentially involving fentanyl, have occurred in other counties.

While there is currently no established way to track fentanyl related overdoses in California, there is intense interest at both the federal level and locally in gathering this information. To enhance our understanding of the magnitude of severe adverse outcomes due to use of illicitly obtained fentanyl in California, **the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is requesting all healthcare facilities to:**

- 1) Voluntarily report suspected and confirmed fentanyl overdose cases to their local health department for reporting to the State. The information you submit will be used solely for public health surveillance. The reports should include:
 - a. Name
 - b. Date of Birth
 - c. Age
 - d. Address of residence
- 2) Test for fentanyl when ordering drug screening on cases of suspected overdose;
- 3) Be aware that Naloxone is effective in reversing the effects of fentanyl, however, we have received reports that it may take repeated doses of Naloxone over several hours to adequately treat fentanyl overdose, likely due to fentanyl's long half-life; and
- 4) Warn patients with a history of substance abuse about the risks of purchasing street drugs at this time. fentanyl is colorless and odorless and cannot be readily detected with laboratory analysis.

