



SAN BENITO COUNTY OPIOID TASK FORCE

DATE: 07/08/2020

TO: San Benito County Residents

FROM: San Benito County Opioid Task Force

RE: Fentanyl Advisory and Opioid Overdoses from Fake Pills

San Benito County, CA. Fentanyl deaths continue to be on the rise in San Benito County and in our neighboring counties (Santa Clara and Monterey). Several of these deaths were



linked to fake pills. Since January 1, 2020 San Benito County has had 2 confirmed fentanyl deaths with several cases still pending investigation.

Fentanyl is a very powerful opioid drug — 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine—and exposure to even small amounts can cause overdose and death. While pharmaceutical fentanyl (which is only available via a prescription) is approved for treating severe pain, illicit fentanyl is often used in illegally made fake pills. Many people take these pills thinking they are taking a prescription pill such as oxycodone, unaware that it may contain lethal doses of fentanyl.

Many opioid pills are made by counterfeiting organizations and most pills on the street are fake. Fake pills are made to look like real prescription medications and come in different types, shapes and colors. Many of the fake oxycodone pills are blue, circular tablets marked with a “M” in a square on one side, and a “30” on the other. Fentanyl is also available in a powder form which is as dangerous and deadly.

No one should take a pill unless it is prescribed to them by their doctor and obtained directly from a pharmacy. Do not take pills given by a friend or bought from others also should not be taken. Taking any “off the street” pills at home when alone is dangerous. Taking fake pills in any circumstance could have deadly consequences.

Local law enforcement agencies have continued to discover fake pills containing fentanyl in circulation across the County.

Social distancing during this pandemic may be particularly hard for some people, and with other stressors, may be contributing to the rise in the fentanyl-related deaths and substance use. Services are available for those who are struggling with stress and substance use issues. The County of San Benito County Behavioral Health Services Department is available to help:

- 831-636-4020 (Monday-Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM)
- 888-636-4020 (24 hr access)

- 831-256-0103 Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital Substance Use Navigator, Ashlee Deherrera
- Local Suicide Crisis Hotline: 1-855-663-5433 (24 hours a day/7 days a week)
- Crisis Text Line, Text “HOME” to 741741 (24 hours per day/7 days per week)

Naloxone (also known by its brand name, Narcan®) is a medication which can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Pharmacists are permitted to furnish Naloxone without a prescription, with most insurances covering most to full price of Naloxone. Free Narcan®, training and kits can be obtained through the San Benito County Opioid Task Force (www.sbcopioidtaskforce.org).