



Marijuana with Fentanyl Awareness

Connecticut Overdose Response Strategy (CT-ORS)

January 19, 2022

UPDATED INFORMATION

Federal and State partners reviewed the 39 suspected incidents where only marijuana use was reported. The review revealed that in at least 30 of the 39 incidents, the patient(s) had a history of opioid use, previous opioid overdose, exposure to multiple substances, or other mitigating factors.

The State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services Forensic Lab reviewed all marijuana plant samples submitted to the lab from July 1, 2021 to November 30, 2021, and found no other marijuana submissions containing fentanyl.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Lab confirmed the presence of fentanyl in the marijuana sample analyzed by the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services Forensic Lab submitted by Plymouth Police Department in early October 2021.

Based on the information gathered since the positive confirmation of marijuana with fentanyl, the CT ORS assesses that the positive confirmation of marijuana with fentanyl was likely an unintentional contamination and an isolated incident.

Original Bulletin

November 15, 2021

The CT ORS and the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services received reports of overdose patients who exhibited opioid overdose symptoms and required naloxone for revival. These patients denied any opioid use and claimed to have only smoked marijuana.

Recent incidents where only marijuana use was reported but naloxone was required:

- July 2021 – 11 cases
- August 2021 – 9 cases
- September 2021 – 9 cases
- October 1 - 26, 2021 – 10 cases

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The reported incidents were dispersed across Connecticut. Several jurisdictions had multiple overdoses with opioid symptoms attributed to marijuana, however no pattern was detected. In early October 2021, Plymouth, Connecticut had several overdose incidents where naloxone was required for revival and patients claimed to have only smoked marijuana. At one of these overdose scenes, Plymouth Police Department was able to secure a sample of the marijuana for testing at the state laboratory.

The Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services Forensic Lab confirmed that the sample of marijuana obtained by Plymouth Police Department tested positive for the following:

- Delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol
- Marijuana
- Fentanyl

This is the first lab confirmed case of marijuana with fentanyl in Connecticut and possibly the first confirmed case in the United States.

The CT ORS Team strongly advises all public health, harm reduction and others working with clients who use marijuana to educate them about the possible dangers of marijuana with fentanyl. In addition, they should assist their clients with obtaining the proper precautions if they will be using marijuana. We strongly advise anyone that is using substances obtained illicitly that they know the signs of an opioid overdose, do not use alone, and have naloxone on hand. If you or someone you are with is experiencing an overdose, call 911 immediately. Please refer to the following link for the CT Good Samaritan Law: <https://www.drugfreect.org/resources/ct-good-samaritan-law/>

The CT ORS Team suspects that the continued volatility of the illicit drug market will lead to continued increases of both fatal and non-fatal overdoses.

Resources

For safe handling information, please refer to [ONDCP Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders](#)

Harm Reduction services are community-based programs that traditionally support persons using substances and are available to assist first responders after an overdose occurs. They can provide and link individuals who experienced an overdose to other important services, programs and outreach. Please refer to the following link for harm reduction services available in your area: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/AIDS--Chronic-Diseases/Prevention/SyringeServicesProgram.pdf>

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