



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



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PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

September 12, 2019

Fentanyl Overdose Health Alert

Dear Colleagues:

This advisory provides information about a suspected fentanyl overdose related to counterfeit Percocet in Marin amidst a trend of similar cases regionally. This advisory offers treatment options and reporting procedures for Marin County clinicians, emergency responders and community-based providers. Marin County Health and Human Services (HHS) is closely monitoring the local situation.

Current Situation

On September 10, 2019, the Santa Clara District Attorney released a public health warning that law enforcement agencies seized a large number of counterfeit 30-milligram Percocet pills that contain fentanyl – not oxycodone hydrochloride – as their sole active ingredient. The tablets visually appear to be the pharmaceutical version—circular in shape, light blue in color, with an “M” stamped on one side and a “30” on the other side. Fatal overdoses tied to these tablets have increased since August 2019 across the region.

Today, Marin County Public Health is investigating a suspected fentanyl overdose of a Marin resident who reportedly only ingested what appeared to be prescription opioid pills.



Counterfeit Percocet containing fentanyl

Fentanyl is 80 to 100 times more potent than morphine and 40 to 50 times more potent than heroin. Most fentanyl overdoses have been linked to illegally manufactured fentanyl and fentanyl analogs.

Actions requested of providers

1. **Exercise increased vigilance** in promptly identifying suspected overdose patients and taking appropriate action. Patients with fentanyl or other high potency opioid-related overdoses may require multiple administrations of naloxone before responding.
2. **Consider toxicology screening** specific for fentanyl when ordering drug panels for opioid overdose patients. Standard urine drug screening may not detect fentanyl or its analogues.
3. **Prescribe and/or recommend Naloxone** to patients, family members or other caregivers at risk for opioid overdose. Most Marin County pharmacies furnish naloxone without a physician prescription.
4. **Warn patients and clients** with a history of substance misuse and abuse about the risks of purchasing street drugs. Counterfeit pills look like their real counterparts in packaging and appearance but may contain harmful, unregulated ingredients. Drugs contaminated with fentanyl cannot be easily distinguished from drugs that are not contaminated.
5. **Refer** patients and families with substance misuse and abuse issues to the 24/7 Mental Health and Substance Use Access and Assessment Hotline (888 818 1115).
6. **Report** suspect fentanyl overdoses to Marin County Public Health phone (415 473 4163) or confidential fax (415 473 6002).

Sincerely,

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