

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

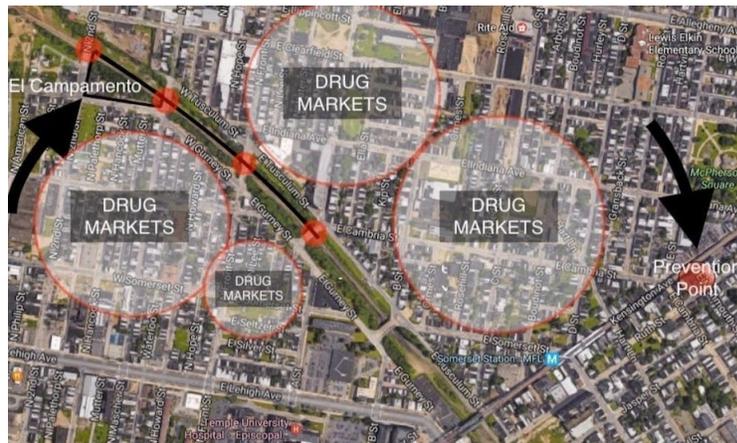


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A SAFER SUPPLY THROUGH SCIENCE

Recent OD Clusters Highlight Dangerous Unpredictability of Illicit Opioid Supply

[PHILADELPHIA] - On the morning of Monday, January 12, **PAGROUNDHOGS** was alerted by community members and the **Philadelphia Department of Health** to an overdose anomaly on a highly trafficked block in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia.



Kensington, North Philadelphia

The initial report was that three (3) individuals had overdosed on the same block within minutes of each other and all had to be transported to the hospital. Within 15 minutes PAG received reports of two (2) more overdoses on the same block. Witnesses reported that these individuals had to have “needles removed from their arms,” by first responders.

While local harm reduction groups—including PAG’s outreach partner, **The Everywhere Project**—were in the field investigating, several more overdoses occurred on various blocks in the same general area.

At 11:40 a.m. the **Philadelphia Department of Public Health** issued an Emergency Overdose Response Declaration, which temporarily lifted Philadelphia's controversial Mobile Service Ban, allowing response teams the freedom to conduct necessary patrols within a confined area of Kensington.

PAGROUNDHOGS was able to obtain a sample from the site of each reported overdose. A total of eight (8) suspected dope samples were promptly delivered to the Center for Forensic Science, Research & Education (CFSRE), our partner lab in Horsham, PA, and tagged for priority analysis.

FINDINGS

Based on initial test results there is no evidence of a single 'bad batch' in circulation. Rather, GC/MS testing revealed an increasing lack of uniformity in the Philadelphia dope supply punctuated by frequent adaptations in cutting practices. This phenomenon is indicative of a competitive black market confined to a small geographic area and where participants compete for the same resources and clientele while under heightened threat of police intervention.

On the morning of Jan. 12, dope bags contained atypically high levels of medetomidine and lidocaine (often as primary substance); another contained xylazine as its primary ingredient, while yet another revealed traces of the novel dissociative 2-FLUORO-2-OXO-PCE. Further LC-QTOF/MS analysis revealed trace amounts of carfentanil, tianeptine, bromazolam and levamisole in one or more bags.

Below are preliminary results from the bags collected; for the purposes of this alert we are only reporting the active substances found in the samples. The notation next to each substance indicates the ratio in parts (P) of a drug or adulterant to the primary drug—which in each of the samples analyzed was fentanyl.

FIRST OVERDOSE CLUSTER REPORTED

SAMPLE 1: MEDETOMIDINE (301.7P)*, PROCAINE (71.9P), 4-ANPP (1.2P), FENTANYL (1P), PHENETHYL-4-ANPP (0.5P), CAFFEINE (0.4P)

SECOND OVERDOSE CLUSTER REPORTED

SAMPLE 2: MEDETOMIDINE (3.8P), FENTANYL (1P), TETRACAINE (0.9P), PROCAINE (0.4p), 4-ANPP (0.3p), LIDOCAINE (trace), XYLAZINE (trace), BTMPS (Tinubin 770) (trace), CARFENTANIL (trace), PHENACETIN (trace),

LEVAMISOLE (trace), PHENETHYL 4-ANPP (trace)

SUBSEQUENT ADVERSE EVENTS

SAMPLE 3: LIDOCAINE (4.3P), MEDETOMIDINE (1.5P), FENTANYL (1P), CAFFEINE (0.2P), 4-ANPP (0.2P)

SAMPLE 4: LIDOCAINE (11.2P), MEDETOMIDINE (2.9P), CAFFEINE (1.1P), FENTANYL (1P), DIMETHYL SULFONE (0.9P), 4-ANPP (0.3P)

SAMPLE 5: LIDOCAINE (16.7P), TETRACAINE (5.0P), MEDETOMIDINE (3.6P), FENTANYL (1P), 4-ANPP (0.2P), LEVAMISOLE (0.1P), CAFFEINE (TRACE)

SAMPLE 6: XYLAZINE (6.6P), FENTANYL (1P), LIDOCAINE (0.8P), TETRACAINE (0.4P), 4-ANPP (0.1P), BENZOCAINE (TRACE), ETHYL-4-ANPP (TRACE), ACETAMINOPHEN (TRACE)

SAMPLE 7: LIDOCAINE (6.6P), MEDETOMIDINE (4.8P), FENTANYL (1P), CAFFEINE (0.8P), 4-ANPP (0.3P)

SAMPLE 8: FENTANYL (1P), XYLAZINE (0.5P), MEDETOMIDINE (0.2P), 4-ANPP (0.1P), PHENACETIN (0.1P), PHENETHYL-4-ANPP (TRACE), ETHYL-4-ANPP (TRACE), 2-FLUORO-2-OXO-PCE (TRACE)

** While quantitative testing is forthcoming, this is the highest ratio of medetomidine to fentanyl in PAG's dataset*

Conclusion

Product inconsistency on individual blocks, and from one corner to the next is creating an increasingly dangerous environment for people who use opioids and is a stark reminder for all individuals to practice universal precautions, carry naloxone, test your drugs, go low and slow, and try not to use alone.

- PAGROUNDHOGS

Stop Guessing, Start Testing



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