



## “Odds Are Alabama” Shines Light on Dangers of Fentanyl

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Odds are...if you buy pills or other illicit drugs online or from a dealer, they will be laced with a deadly dose of Fentanyl. According to a 2022 United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) laboratory study, six out of 10 fake pills seized by the DEA contained a potentially deadly dose of Fentanyl. These were some of the facts highlighted today by several statewide organizations announcing the launch of “Odds Are Alabama,” a year-long campaign to bring awareness to Alabamians on the dangers and prevalence of illicit Fentanyl.

“[Odds Are Alabama](#)” will not only heighten awareness of the dangers, but it will also provide critical information regarding help for those with substance use disorders, along with information about medication that can reverse an overdose and strips to test drugs for Fentanyl.

Dr. Scott Harris, State Public Health Officer, said “Alabama has seen a tremendous increase in opioid overdoses over the last several years. With about two-thirds of all overdoses nationwide attributed to synthetic drugs like Fentanyl, it’s obvious why the need for this campaign is so great.”

According to the DEA, illicit drug manufacturers and dealers are lacing other drugs like cocaine and marijuana with Fentanyl and manufacturing fake pills that include the drug to ensure that users are hooked on the first try. Because a lethal dose of Fentanyl is only about two milligrams, equivalent to a few grains of salt, it’s becoming increasingly common for users to overdose on Fentanyl-laced products. In Alabama, the number of people who died from Fentanyl poisoning more than doubled from 2019 to 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Closer to home, Lauren Littlefield of Montgomery shared her family’s tragic story of losing her brother due to a Fentanyl overdose. “Last April, my brother being a curious 18-year-old took something given to him by a co-worker. He had no idea that what he was taking was laced with fentanyl, and by the time the ambulance had gotten to him, the damage was done. All it took to change our family’s lives forever was one pill, one time.”

“We hear from hospitals all across the state of the alarming increase in patients coming to emergency departments with a Fentanyl overdose,” said Joseph Marchant, CEO of Bibb Medical Center and chairman of the Alabama Hospital Association. “Unfortunately, many of these individuals don’t make it,

and those who do survive are often left with injuries that can last a lifetime. We have to find a way to let people know that if they don't get a pill from their healthcare provider or pharmacy, the chances are very high that they are making a deadly decision."

Echoing these sentiments, Dr. Julia Boothe, president of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, urged young people and their parents and grandparents to heed the warnings and to understand the dangers are real.

"Opioid prescriptions in Alabama have fallen for eight consecutive years, but a surge of illicit Fentanyl is driving overdose deaths to their highest level ever," said Dr. Boothe. "Our message to every Alabamian is this: Never take any drug except those prescribed by your physician and filled by a pharmacist. Fake pills containing Fentanyl are everywhere in Alabama. They look identical to real medicine, but you won't know until it's too late. Don't take the chance because one fake pill can kill."

For more information on the dangers of Fentanyl and the resources available, visit [OddsAreAlabama.org](http://OddsAreAlabama.org). The webpage, hosted by VitAL, includes important facts about fentanyl, along with links to additional resources, such as help in recovering from an overdose and assistance for those with substance use disorders.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) encourages everyone to download the [Connect Alabama app](#), a behavioral health services and treatment finder application, that provides individuals instant access to education, information and services related to substance use, mental health, and prevention. The app is a partnership of ADPH, ADMH, and managed by VitAL of The University of Alabama School of Social Work.

**Campaign sponsors include:**

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