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**New Mexico Health Alert Network (HAN) Alert**  
**Changes in New Mexico Illicit Opioid Supply**  
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**Background:**

The NM Department of Health (NMHealth) Adulterant Checking Program is noting significant changes in the illicit opioid supply within New Mexico. Recent samples from testing sites in Albuquerque and Espanola have reported new adulterants, most notably BTMPS, an industrial chemical used in plastic products, as well as a significant decrease in the amount of fentanyl in these samples. In some cases, no opioids or other psychoactive substances were identified. There are reports from harm reduction sites, opioid treatment programs (OTP), and emergency departments that individuals are experiencing severe withdrawal symptoms. These changes in supply reflect national trends identified by harm reduction and drug checking programs around the country.

While decreased concentration of fentanyl in the drug supply can lead to intense withdrawal symptoms, the adulterants present in these pills can cause additional complications. The drug supply appears to be changing rapidly, and its unpredictability can be dangerous.

**Adulterant Checking Program:**

The NMHealth adulterant checking program, which began in November 2023, allows individuals to have street drugs tested for adulterants. Current locations are The Mountain Center in Espanola and NM Harm Reduction Collaborative in Albuquerque. Starting in November, adulterant checking will be available at Alianza in Roswell and the public health office in Las Cruces. People can safely bring street drugs to these sites for testing, Monday through Friday during normal business hours. Preliminary results are available in 20 minutes, with lab confirmation usually available in one to two weeks.

Beginning in late July, the Adulterant Checking Program found the following in samples sold as fentanyl (either alone or in combination with fentanyl):

- **BTMPS or Tinuvin 770:** an industrial chemical additive used as protection in plastics. Individuals are reporting a harsh taste, coughing, vomiting, and blurry vision after injection. Individuals are also reporting an odor similar to fish, bug spray, or chlorine. BTMPS is a known nicotinic acetylcholine receptor antagonist and may cause effects similar to nicotine.
- **Lidocaine:** Administered intravenously lidocaine may cause vasoconstriction, bruising, shooting pain, ischemia, and heart palpitations; individuals may present with wounds similar in appearance to xylazine. Additionally, lidocaine is known to cause false positive results with xylazine test strips.

- **Xylazine:** a non-opioid, central nervous system depressant often mixed with illicit fentanyl to prolong the opioid effect. Xylazine can cause skin ulcerations and necrosis at injection sites or other areas of the skin.
- **No fentanyl detected (these samples also tested negative on fentanyl test strips):** Individuals will have withdrawal symptoms such as: chills, irritability, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramps, restlessness, trouble sleeping, stomach pain, and runny nose.
- **Acetaminophen:** an insecticide sold as fentanyl powder and is a known nicotinic acetylcholine receptor agonist and may produce effects similar to nicotine, including nausea and vomiting.
- **Dextromethorphan:** a common cough suppressant.
- **Para-fluoral fentanyl and an assortment of fentanyl precursors and intermediaries commonly associated with illicit fentanyl manufacturing:** Many can cause effects similar to fentanyl.

Various combinations of adulterants have been identified in the blue M30 counterfeit pills and both the grey and black fentanyl powders.

As the drug supply continues to change, an individual's behavior or habits may become more unpredictable and may include things such as buying from unknown sources, using more of a substance, and/or using more frequently. These changes may make an individual more susceptible to overdose or other undesirable side effects.

#### **Recommendations for providers:**

- Encourage clients to have their substances tested through the NMHealth Adulterant Checking Program.
- If any individual has consumed anything sold as fentanyl that has a chemical "taste," they are encouraged to dispose of those substances.
- Talk to patients about safety precautions such as:
  - In cases of emergency or suspected overdose, individuals should call 911 as symptoms may not be the result of opioids. The risk of overdose and the importance of carrying naloxone should be reinforced.
  - Naloxone should still be given for any suspected overdose.
  - Additionally, in case of no naloxone, rescue breathing (CPR without chest compressions) will continue to supply oxygen if there is respiratory depression.
- Medication assisted treatment (MAT) is now offered at DOH Public Health Offices at little to no cost. This low-barrier resource offers buprenorphine to individuals with an opioid use disorder (OUD). [Home - New Mexico Pathways \(pathwaysnm.org\)](https://pathwaysnm.org)
- Additional providers for MAT/MOUD can be found by [clicking here](#).

#### **Resources:**

1. Find a harm reduction site near you: [The New Mexico HIV-Hepatitis-STD Online Resource Guide \(nmhivguide.org\)](https://nmhivguide.org)
2. Order no-cost naloxone and learn how to use it: [NMDOH Harm Reduction | Transforming Lives for Healthier Communities \(nmharmreduction.org\)](https://nmharmreduction.org)

3. Find a NMHealth MAT provider and resources: [Home - New Mexico Pathways \(pathwaysnm.org\)](https://pathwaysnm.org) or call the NMHealth Helpline at 1-833-796-8773.
4. Find additional MAT providers: [Opioid Treatment is Available Now | MAT | Statewide New Mexico \(doseofreality.com\)](https://doseofreality.com)

#### References:

##### Acetamiprid:

- [Acetamiprid | C10H11ClN4 | CID 213021 - PubChem \(nih.gov\)](https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/Acetamiprid)
- [Acute poisoning with acetamiprid, a type of neonicotinoid insecticide causing severe lactic acidosis: A case report - PMC \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36111111/)

##### BTMPS:

- <https://jpet.aspetjournals.org/content/268/2/718.short>
- [Bis\(2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-4-piperidyl\) sebacate | C28H52N2O4 | CID 164282 - PubChem \(nih.gov\)](https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/Bis(2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-4-piperidyl)_sebacate)
- [UNC Opioid Watchlist https://opioiddatalab.ghost.io/sep2024/](https://opioiddatalab.ghost.io/sep2024/)
- [Monographs \(cfsre.org\)](https://cfsre.org/)

**New Mexico Health Alert Network:** To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

**Please Note** that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the **“New Mexico Health Alert Network”** default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.