

# **Administrator Anne Milgram Remarks on ONDCP**

## **Press Call Addressing the Overdose Epidemic**

### **As presented:**

Thank you and good morning. Thank you to ONDCP and to all the federal partners with whom we have been working on this important issue. This is a critical moment in our country.

DEA's mission is to keep American communities safe and healthy and we are in the midst of an overdose crisis that has reached a devastating new height. 265 people die every day from drug overdoses. Countless more [people] overdose and are fortunate to survive. This is a national crisis. It knows no geographical bounds. And it continues to get worse. This crisis is driven by fentanyl and methamphetamine.

Today drug cartels in Mexico are mass-producing fentanyl and methamphetamine largely sourced from chemicals in China and they're distributing these substances throughout the United States. We are finding these deadly drugs in every state; in cities, suburbs, rural areas and local communities spanning the country.

DEA's fentanyl seizures this year have reached record highs. We've already seized 12,000 pounds of fentanyl. The amount of illegal fentanyl in our country has risen to an unprecedented level. This year alone, DEA has seized enough fentanyl to provide every member of the United States population with a lethal dose and we are still seizing more fentanyl each and every day. Synthetic fentanyl and methamphetamine are driving the overdose crisis in America.

According to the CDC, a majority of the overdose deaths we are talking about today involve synthetic opioids, like fentanyl. Methamphetamine, and other psychostimulants, were involved in a quarter of the overdose deaths. Even more alarming is that these synthetic drugs are being distributed in new forms. Fentanyl is being mixed with other drugs like cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine. And drug traffickers and networks are flooding our communities with fentanyl and methamphetamine in the form of fake, counterfeit prescription pills. These pills are made and marketed to purposefully deceive Americans into thinking that they are real prescription medications, but they are not. In reality, they are potentially deadly drugs. They are fentanyl and methamphetamine.

So far this year, DEA and our law enforcement partners have seized more than 14 million fake pills – an amount that has continued to rise dramatically year over year. Fentanyl-laced pills are extraordinarily dangerous and are responsible for many of the overdose deaths that we are reporting today. These types of pills are easily accessible today on social media and on e-commerce platforms, and they are widely available.

Drug dealers are now in our homes. Wherever there is a smartphone or a computer that dealer is one click away. It is clear that our work has never been more urgent.

DEA's top priority is to protect our communities from the criminal drug networks that threaten our safety and our health. The same criminal drug networks that are driving today's devastating overdose rates. Our resolve to combatting this overdose crisis is unwavering.

DEA looks forward to our continued collaboration with all of our partners on this critically important issue. It is now my privilege to introduce the Director of NIDA, Dr. Volkow.