



**County of Sacramento**

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**DRUG OVERDOSE HEALTH ALERT:  
Counterfeit Norco Containing Fentanyl  
April 1, 2016**

**Situational Update**

The Sacramento County Division of Public Health has received reports of 36 opioid-related overdoses since March 23 associated with ingestion of counterfeit Norco prescription pain pills being sold on the streets. Nine (25%) of the 36 overdose patients have died. These counterfeit pills contain the synthetic opioid fentanyl instead of the active ingredients of Norco (acetaminophen and hydrocodone). Please see actions requested of clinicians and emergency responders below:

**Actions Requested of All Clinicians and Emergency Responders:**

1. **Report all deaths** from suspected or confirmed opioid overdose to the Sacramento County Coroner by phone (916) 874-9320 and fax (916) 874-9257.
2. **Report** to Sacramento County Division of Public Health (SCDPH) electronically via CalREDIE or via confidential fax (916) 854-9709 the following suspected and confirmed drug poisoning cases:
  - *Emergency department visits* due to opioid overdose
  - *All deaths* due to opioid overdoseMedical records should be sent via confidential fax (916) 854-9709.
3. **Exercise increased vigilance** in promptly identifying suspected overdose patients and taking appropriate action. Signs and symptoms of opioid overdose include unconsciousness or unresponsiveness, respiratory depression or arrest, cyanosis, vomiting and pinpoint pupils.
4. **Warn patients** against taking prescription-type pills that are not prescribed by and obtained from one's own physician and/or pharmacy. Counterfeit Norco containing fentanyl may not be easily distinguished from non-counterfeit Norco. Fentanyl is estimated to be 80 times as potent as morphine and hundreds of times more potent than heroin.
5. **Consider toxicology screening** specific for fentanyl when ordering drug panels for overdose patients.

If you need more information about reporting suspected cases of drug poisoning overdoses, call Sacramento County Public Health at (919) 875-5881 Monday-Friday between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Olivia Kasirye MD in black ink.

Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS  
Public Health Officer