

LLANO COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

OFFICES OF
Llano County Judge,
Llano County Attorney, &
District Attorney's Office
33rd/424th Judicial Districts



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June 11, 2021

LLANO COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT REFERENCE FENTANYL DRUG OVERDOSES

Llano, TX- 4:00 PM-

Llano County has experienced 6 reported drug overdoses that have resulted in the death of one person and hospitalization of others within recent weeks. Law enforcement officers conducting investigations include the Llano Police Department, Llano County Sheriff's Office, 33rd/424th District Attorney's Office investigators, and the DEA Drug Taskforce. The office of the Llano County Judge and the Llano County Attorney are also involved in assisting and coordinating with EMS, medical personnel, and other emergency responders to educate the public about this potentially deadly danger.

Law enforcement personnel involved in the still ongoing investigations have discovered illegal drugs at several of the locations where overdosed persons have been treated. The seized drugs appeared to be pharmaceutical narcotic tablets. However, preliminary examination and testing revealed the tablets were actually made outside of legitimate pharmaceutical laboratories and contained controlled substances other than those found in legally manufactured drugs. The seized drugs actually contained suspected "fentanyl" which is a very powerful synthetic opioid similar to morphine used for pain but 50 to 100 times more potent according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Investigators have submitted seized substances to the Texas Department of Public Safety Laboratory for expedited analysis for the presence of fentanyl in the recovered pills.

Fentanyl is an extremely dangerous drug and is one of the major causes of opioid related overdoses according to some studies. Unfortunately, fentanyl is also sold illegally and formed into pills along with other drugs which are disguised as legal prescription drugs such as hydrocodone and oxycontin which are also strong pain medications. Traffickers of these illegal tablets will often mix combinations of narcotics with small amounts of fentanyl which intensify the effects of the accompanying narcotic often leading to overdose and death.

All of the discovered drugs which contained the suspected fentanyl were illegally produced drugs made to look like a version of the narcotic "hydrocodone". Field tests conducted by deputies reflected mixtures of codeine and fentanyl rather than the normal ingredients found in legally manufactured hydrocodone.

Law enforcement officers are seeking any information about anyone selling drugs outside of the legal distribution chains. Anyone with information about illegal drug trafficking is asked to call the Llano County Sheriff's Office at 325-247-5767 and provide information. Callers may remain anonymous.

Anyone using illegally obtained drugs are taking a deadly risk with their health and lives by using any illicitly marketed tablets sold as prescription drugs. Users can easily overdose on the fentanyl infused drugs which can result in serious bodily injury and death. Texas law provides that the punishment for someone illegally delivering a drug which results in serious bodily injury or death to another person is increased by one degree over the penalty for delivery.

Llano County Judge Ron Cunningham stated, "Anyone using illicit drugs are obviously endangering their health and safety and the number of recent overdoses in Llano County due to suspected fentanyl is alarming. We urge the public to not only be aware of these dangers, but take precautions not to make contact with suspected narcotics. Due to the

potency of fentanyl, even skin contact can cause adverse reactions. Any persons who believe they may have been exposed to fentanyl should call 9-1-1 immediately.”

County Attorney Dwain Rogers stated, “The public should be aware that use of fentanyl is a high-risk activity with a much greater chance of overdose, which can be fatal. Drugs laced with Fentanyl are often mislabeled and anyone using illicit drugs cannot assume that they know what they are taking. It is quite possible to take Fentanyl without the user’s knowledge, resulting in overdose.”

District Attorney Sonny McAfee stated, “Our office usually focuses on the prosecution of drug offenses. However, fentanyl is such a powerful and dangerous drug that we are working with law enforcement, other county officials, and anyone else who can help prevent more overdoses and the associated dangers to the public.”

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