



HEALTH ALERT
APRIL 7, 2016

**OPIOID OVERDOSES POSSIBLY RELATED TO
COUNTERFEIT NORCO CONTAINING FENTANYL**

SUMMARY:

Contra Costa Public Health received 2 reports of opioid-related overdoses in March 2016 possibly associated with ingestion of counterfeit Norco prescription pain pills being sold on the streets. Elsewhere in California, including Sacramento County, dozens of patients have been reported with overdoses due to counterfeit pills which contained the synthetic opioid fentanyl instead of the active ingredients of Norco (acetaminophen and hydrocodone).

Actions Requested of Healthcare Professionals:

1. **REPORT suspected and confirmed drug poisoning cases** to Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 or after hours 925-646-2441 including:
 - a. Emergency Department visits due to opioid overdoses
 - b. All deaths due to opioid overdosesMedical records should be sent via confidential fax to 925-313-6465.
2. **CONSIDER** toxicology screening specific for fentanyl in cases of severe overdoses.
3. **WARN** clients and patients against taking prescription-like pills that are not prescribed by a health care provider and dispensed by a pharmacy. Counterfeit Norco pills containing fentanyl are very difficult to distinguish from actual Norco pills. Fentanyl is estimated to be 80 times more potent than morphine and hundreds of times more potent than heroin.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

Contra Costa Public Health can be reached at 925-313-6740 or after hours 925-646-2441. Our confidential fax number is 925-313-6465.

