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**DARCEL D. CLARK**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET  
BRONX, N.Y. 10451  
(718) 590-2234

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 9, 2023**

**BRONX DA DARCEL D. CLARK, SPECIAL NARCOTICS PROSECUTOR  
BRIDGET BRENNAN MARK NATIONAL FENTANYL AWARENESS DAY  
Bronx has Highest Rate of Overdose Death in New York City;  
Prosecutors Implore People to Educate Themselves on Dangers**

Today, National Fentanyl Awareness Day, underscores a deadly public health crisis afflicting the nation, New York City and the Bronx. Fentanyl and other synthetic drugs, such as xylazine, are widely distributed in mixtures and quantities that significantly raise the risk of overdose deaths. In New York City, Bronx County has the highest rate of overdose deaths, and is also a main distribution hub for illegal drugs.

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan encourage New Yorkers to educate themselves about the ever-changing opioid crisis. Knowledge is power – in this case, the power to save lives.

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark said, "If the Bronx was a state, it would have the second highest overdose death rate nationwide, after West Virginia. While we focus on disrupting large scale narcotics operations to reduce the supply of dangerous drugs, we also support treatment and prevention efforts. The Bronx needs more money and resources put into the community to fight this scourge. The financial settlement from opioid drug manufacturers needs to make its way to the Bronx."

"Thousands of New Yorkers are mourning precious lives claimed by deadly fentanyl," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan. "Fentanyl is a factor in roughly 80% of overdose deaths in New York City, and we have witnessed an explosion of lethal drug mixtures containing fentanyl and other synthetic drugs, such as xylazine, as well as counterfeit prescription pills containing fentanyl and xylazine. Fentanyl is also marketed as cocaine to unsuspecting buyers. Fentanyl Awareness Day serves as a reminder that even casual or occasional drug use could be fatal."



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Each year, more Bronx residents fatally overdose than residents of any other borough in the city. Four out of the top five neighborhoods most impacted by drug deaths are consistently in the Bronx, and Black New Yorkers have the highest rates of fatal overdose among all races/ethnicities, according to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

Over 3,100 people are estimated to have fatally overdosed in the city during the 12 months ending in November of 2022, according to predictive data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is the equivalent of one New Yorker dying of a drug overdose every three hours.

Fentanyl is involved in roughly eight out of 10 overdose deaths in New York City. A highly potent, shape-shifting synthetic opioid, fentanyl has saturated the drug market, which is highly unpredictable. Drug users cannot be sure of what they are purchasing. Even sellers may not know the contents of their products. Lethal drug mixtures contain fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, and a wide range of natural and synthetic substances, including heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and more recently xylazine, a non-opioid veterinary sedative.

Approximately 40% of the fentanyl seizures carried out by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office and their partners, including the Bronx DA's Office, occurred in the Bronx – a main distribution hub for traffickers in our City and the Northeast. These seizures now include another extremely dangerous drug: xylazine and xylazine mixed with fentanyl.

Overdose deaths involving xylazine – a tranquilizer drug meant for horses, cattle and other animals – have increased by 36% between January and October in 2022 and the same time period in 2021. The overdose antidote naloxone (Narcan), which is commonly used to reverse fentanyl overdoses, is ineffective against xylazine, a non-opioid sedative.

In 2022, nearly 1,000 pounds of powdered fentanyl and drug mixtures containing fentanyl and/or heroin was recovered in cases handled by the SNP, in conjunction with the city's five District Attorneys, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New York Division, the New York City Police Department, and other local, state, and federal partners. Additionally, 950,000 counterfeit pills containing fentanyl and other substances, such as xylazine, were seized. This represents an increase of more than 425% over 2021.



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Fake pills are readily found on social media. No pharmaceutical pill bought on social media or on the street is safe. The only safe medications are ones prescribed directly to you by a trusted medical professional and dispensed by a licensed pharmacist.

Fentanyl overdoses can be treated with naloxone, a widely available overdose reversal drug. New Yorkers who are trained in how to use naloxone, and carry the antidote with them, can potentially save a life. It is critically important to call 911 when administering naloxone, particularly since it may be ineffective against xylazine.

For New York City wellness resources, visit [NYC Well](#). DOHMH provides trainings and regularly updated information on how to obtain and administer [naloxone \(Narcan\)](#).