

## Bruce's Law

### ***Background:***

Across the country, fentanyl has grown into a national health crisis some experts see as the third wave of the opioid epidemic. Deaths due to the synthetic opioid surged 55% between 2020 and 2021, driving an overall spike in opioid deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

In September 2021, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued a Public Safety Alert warning Americans about the alarming increase in the lethality and availability of fake prescription pills containing fentanyl and methamphetamine.

Law enforcement seizures of pills containing illicit fentanyl increased dramatically between January 2018 and December 2021. These counterfeit pills have been seized by DEA in every U.S. state in unprecedented quantities. More than 9.5 million counterfeit pills were seized at this time in 2021, which is more than the last two years combined. DEA laboratory testing reveals a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit pills containing at least two milligrams of fentanyl, which is considered a lethal dose. A deadly dose of fentanyl is small enough to fit on the tip of a pencil.

Bruce's Law has been introduced in memory of Sandy Snodgrass's 22-year-old son Bruce, a young Alaskan who died in October of 2021, after taking a drug she doesn't think he knew was fentanyl. Three generations of Sandy's family, Bruce's father and grandfather, also died as a result of their own addictions.

### ***Bruce's Law would:***

- Amend Section 102 of CARA to authorize the Secretary of HHS in coordination with other federal departments and agencies to conduct a public education and awareness campaign (for school-aged children, youth, parents, first responders, and providers) on the dangers of using street drugs which may be contaminated with fentanyl, the prevention of street drug abuse, including through the safe disposal of prescription medications and other safety precautions, and detection of early warning signs of addiction in school-aged children and youth.
- Authorize the Secretary of HHS to establish a Federal Interagency Working Group on Fentanyl Contamination of illegal drugs, which would include various federal agencies, including HIDTA state directors.
- This Working Group would consult with experts at the state, tribal, and local levels, including family members of adults, school-aged children, and youth, as well as individuals in the recovery process, to identify strategies, resources, and supports to improve state, tribal, and local responses to the incidence of drug overdose by fentanyl-contaminated illegal drugs.
- The Working Group will additionally examine all federal efforts directed towards reducing and preventing drug overdose by fentanyl-contaminated illegal drugs and make recommendations for educating middle and high school students on the dangers of street drugs contaminated by fentanyl.
- Lastly, this legislation authorizes new Community-Based Coalition Enhancement Grants to educate youth on the risks of street drugs contaminated with fentanyl. This program would allow Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Coalitions, currently run through the Office of National Drug Control Policy, to access new funding specifically with to focus on the dangers of fentanyl contamination. This program is modeled after a similar enhancement program authorized in CARA in 2016.