



June 1, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians:

For many years, preventing addiction in our young people has been a focus for public health officials and educators. Overall, our students and young people make excellent decisions about avoiding cigarettes, alcohol, and other substances, based on [data](https://communitiesthatcarecoalition.com/surveys/) from the Communities That Care Coalition (<https://communitiesthatcarecoalition.com/surveys/>). The rates of use of nearly all substances in our rural region have declined substantially in the last 40 years, which made an article in this week's *New York Times*, so devastating to read.

[Fentanyl Tainted Pills Bought on Social Media Cause Youth Drug Deaths to Soar](#)

Young people purchased, what they believed to be, Percocet, Adderall, and Xanax through widely accepted and popular social media & messaging apps, such as TikTok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp, thinking it might help them with stress, anxiety, and other physical or psychological pain. They swallowed that one pill and were dead within minutes.

The illicit pill market these days is heavily contaminated with fake pressed pills made to look like their prescription counterparts, but containing potentially lethal doses of Fentanyl. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid roughly 50-100x more potent than heroin, or morphine, and is what's driving much of the current surge in overdose deaths. As medical providers, we have taken care of students in Western Massachusetts who have been exposed to these pressed pills, one of whom died.

Please talk to the young people in your life about the importance of never taking or purchasing a pill from another person. Most parents don't understand the social media world our kids interact with all day. Access to a poison pill masked as another drug is shockingly easy.

The DEA has some good material on this including the One Pill Can Kill campaign, which you can find [here](#). **The bottom line is that any drug purchased illicitly off the street, or from the internet, should be assumed to contain fentanyl and could be deadly.**



If you have questions, please reach out to your child's medical provider, the school nurse, or your region's youth education and harm prevention coalition. We have provided a list, which you can access [here](#).

We've also included a link from a recent New York Times article, which you can find [here](#), and to the left by scanning the QR code, called "As Fentanyl Overdoses Rises, How To Keep Loved Ones Safe".

Sincerely,

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