



**HAMILTON COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**

PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Hamilton County Public Health – Health Alert: Carfentanil in Heroin

Please distribute to all emergency department physicians and nurses, first responders and clinical staff working with substance users. Please also share with your non-hospital based colleagues.

*Timothy I. Ingram
Health Commissioner*

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Dear Colleagues,

Between July 13-15, public health surveillance of emergency department visits for Hamilton County observed that drug-related patient encounters surpassed the expected visit count threshold. In addition, the Greater Cincinnati Fusion Center has issued a warning for the use and finding of carfentanil in heroin based on law enforcement surveillance. Furthermore, Columbus and Akron have recently reported an unusually high number of overdoses in a short period of time. In Akron, over three days there were 25 reported overdoses with four being fatal. Columbus reported 10 overdoses in a nine hour period with two being fatal.

Carfentanil is an analog of the synthetic opioid analgesic fentanyl. It is 10,000 times more potent than morphine and 100 times more potent than fentanyl. Carfentanil is intended for large-animal use only and is not approved for use in humans.

Carfentanil has been seen in several cases in the Cincinnati area in the past week.

Please alert those working with substance users of this potentially deadly mixture. Currently, we do not know what quantities of carfentanil are present in street drugs or the manufacturing methods used by those supplying heroin and carfentanil. Additionally, multiple doses of naloxone will likely be required when responding to overdoses.

We appreciate your continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Stephen Bjornson, MD
Medical Director
Hamilton County Public Health

Tim Ingram
Health Commissioner
Hamilton County Public Health