



**Boston Public Health Commission
Health Advisory
PERCOCET CONTAMINATED WITH FENTANYL**

On June 22, 2016, the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) and the Boston Police Department (BPD) issued an advisory to the treatment community about a series of fentanyl-related unintentional overdoses tied to contaminated Percocet pills. BPHC is encouraging providers and health care professionals to ask any suspected narcotic overdose patients directly if they have taken "Perc 30s."

Fentanyl is a form of opioid, and when used in combination with Percocet and other drugs, can cause severe injury and even death. Over the past several days, emergency responders have responded to multiple overdose cases involving patients who reported taking a 30 milligram Percocet pill. One case resulted in death and two required emergency administration of Narcan, a nasal spray opiate antidote. When tested by police, the pills that one patient believed to be Percocet were found to contain fentanyl, rather than the generic form of Percocet called oxycodone.

The abuse of illicit and prescription drugs continues to be of major concern in Boston. As of June 14, 2016, Boston EMS reported administration of Narcan 655 times since the start of the year compared to 522 times in the same time period in 2015.

BPHC encourages emergency departments and emergency response services, health care providers, substance abuse treatment services providers, public safety first responders, and the public to exercise increased vigilance in promptly identifying suspected overdose patients and taking appropriate action. Signs and symptoms of fentanyl overdose are consistent with opioid overdose and include: unconsciousness or unresponsiveness; respiratory depression or arrest; cyanosis; vomiting; and pinpoint pupils.

The Good Samaritan Law provides protection to people who call 911 to report drug overdoses. This law is intended to encourage people to report drug overdoses as soon as possible, even if drugs are present at the scene.

BPHC's Overdose Prevention and Narcan distribution program trains opioid users and their families, treatment providers and community members on how to prevent, recognize, and intervene during an opioid overdose using nasal naloxone. Providers and residents interested in overdose prevention training can contact Helen McDermott at the BPHC Overdose Prevention Program at 617-534-5072.

Please note that pills that tested positive for Fentanyl in recent overdose cases contained markings of "A" over "215" similar to pills shown below:

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