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State crime lab confirms confiscated pill is fentanyl disguised as oxycodone

First time extremely potent synthetic opioid found in this form in Alaska

ANCHORAGE — Following the arrest of an individual for driving under the influence of drugs in Juneau, one of the items found in their possession was a pill that appeared to be a 30 mg oxycodone tablet. Testing at the Alaska State Crime Lab, however, revealed the active ingredient in the pill to be fentanyl rather than oxycodone. Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is much more potent and can be lethal in very small doses.

This is the first time that a counterfeit prescription opioid tablet made with fentanyl has been identified in Alaska; however, many other states have been seeing these counterfeit tablets for months.

The distribution of counterfeit tablets represents an important public health threat, and the general public should be made aware of the significant risks to life and health when purchasing what appears to be prescription medications from any source other than a legitimate pharmacy. Unfortunately, it can be very difficult to distinguish a counterfeit pill from a legitimate one.

The Alaska Division of Public Health recently launched a website dedicated to educating the public about the issue of heroin and opioid addiction and providing helpful information and links to treatment and support services for persons who are addicted to opioids. The website is available at:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Director/Pages/heroin-opioids/default.aspx>
