



Community-led monitoring of the unregulated drug supply

Kingston Police Service Board Meeting

June 19, 2025

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the members of our communities that have lost their lives – both in the ongoing toxic drug supply crisis and long before.

We acknowledge that racialized communities and survivors of colonization are disproportionately impacted by the toxic drug supply crisis.

We acknowledge that the land on which we operate in Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

We know that many of the samples we check are linked to both fatal and non-fatal overdose, as well as adverse health events – we acknowledge the people and pain behind the data we share.

We acknowledge that we only have access to this data because people who use drugs donate their drugs to our program in an effort to reduce the harms associated with using unregulated substances and facilitate community-led drug market monitoring and education.

Ontario's Drug Checking Community is a national leader in drug checking service delivery and community-led unregulated drug market monitoring and education.

It involves implementing the offsite drug checking model designed and in use by [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) since 2019 in other jurisdictions across the province. The primary reason for doing so is to inform evidence-based responses to the worsening toxic drug supply crisis by educating people who use drugs, community health workers, public health units, clinicians, first responders, policy makers, coroners and toxicology laboratories, and others about what's circulating in the unregulated drug supply and anticipated harms.

Having checked over 18,000 samples using [gold standard technologies for chemical analysis that are validated for overdose prevention drug checking](#) and publicly disseminated hundreds of drug market monitoring and drug education reports, the program has received international recognition and is a national authority on Canada's unregulated drug supply.

Who we are

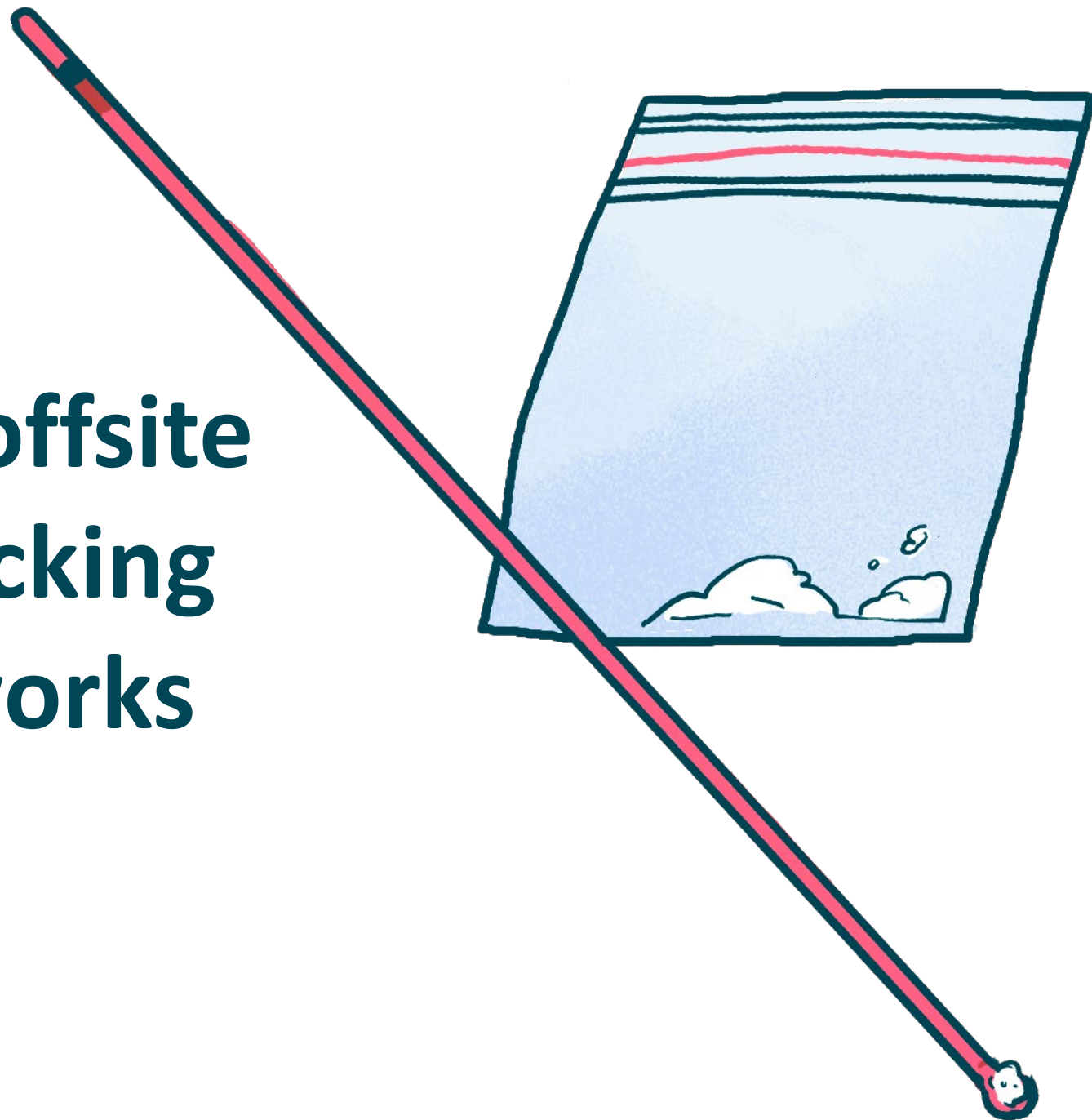
Collection sites: Community agencies exempted to collect drug checking samples and share drug checking results, as part of the services they offer to people who use drugs.

Analysis sites: Clinical, research, or government laboratories exempted to analyze samples and report drug checking results.

The central operating team: Responsible for the overall design, management, and sustainability of the program, as well as conducting and publicly disseminating unregulated drug market monitoring and drug education and community building.



**How our offsite
drug checking
model works**



Like supervised consumption, drug checking operates by way of exemptions from Canada's *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*

Exemption by Minister

56 (1) The Minister may, on any terms and conditions that the Minister considers necessary, exempt from the application of all or any of the provisions of this Act or the regulations any person or class of persons or any controlled substance or precursor or any class of either of them if, in the opinion of the Minister, the exemption is necessary for a medical or scientific purpose or is otherwise in the public interest.

Exemption for medical purpose — supervised consumption site

56.1 (1) For the purpose of allowing certain activities to take place at a supervised consumption site, the Minister may, on any terms and conditions that the Minister considers necessary, exempt the following from the application of all or any of the provisions of this Act or the regulations if, in the opinion of the Minister, the exemption is necessary for a medical purpose:

- (a)** any person or class of persons in relation to a controlled substance or precursor that is obtained in a manner not authorized under this Act; or
- (b)** any controlled substance or precursor or any class of either of them that is obtained in a manner not authorized under this Act.

How it works

Stored



Collection Survey

Sample type: *

Sample ID: *

What was the sample purchased as? Check all that apply. *

- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ 2C class
- ☐ Amphetamine
- ☐ Benzodiazepine
- ☐ Cocaine



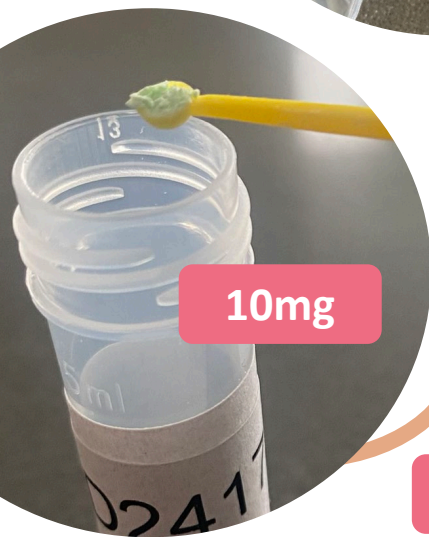
Urolator Express
Pack



Transported

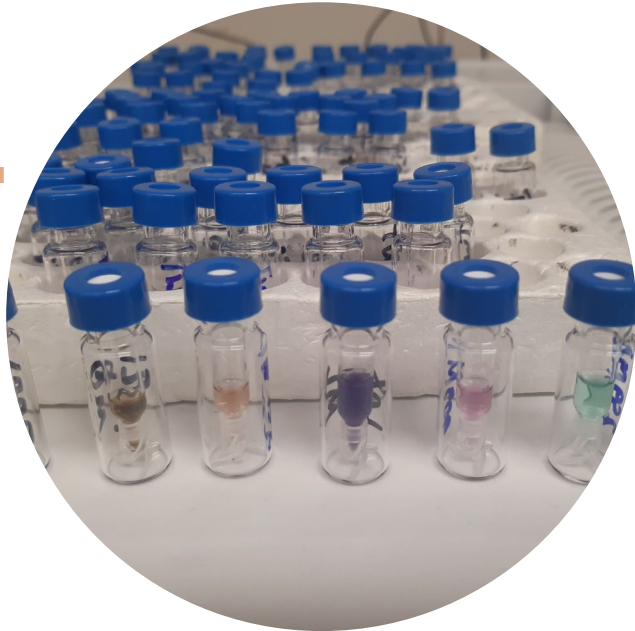
Collected

10mg



How it works

Analyzed



Sample ICH129

Sample Overview

Date Checked:
May 14, 2025

Sample Type:
Used equipment

Expected Drug(s):
Fentanyl

This is a comprehensive list of the substances found in this sample. Depending on the technology used, the substances found could include drugs and non-drug fillers. While we cannot provide precise information about the amount of each substance found, we've done our best to list substances found from most to least present.

Results

Technology:
GC-MS (Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry)

[Technology Limitations](#)

Substances Found:

[Drug Dictionary](#)

Caffeine
Fentanyl(i)
Fluorofentanyl(i)
Xylazine(i)
Medetomidine(i)
Methylenedioxymethamphetamine(i)
Protodesnitazene(i)
Ethylbromazolam (benzodiazepine-related)(i)
Bromazolam (benzodiazepine-related)(i)

Notes

(i) | Indicates this is a noteworthy drug. "Noteworthy drugs" are drugs that (i) are linked to overdose or other unpleasant or abnormal effects, (ii) are highly potent or related to highly potent drugs, or (iii) may not be desired by some clients.

Were these results helpful?

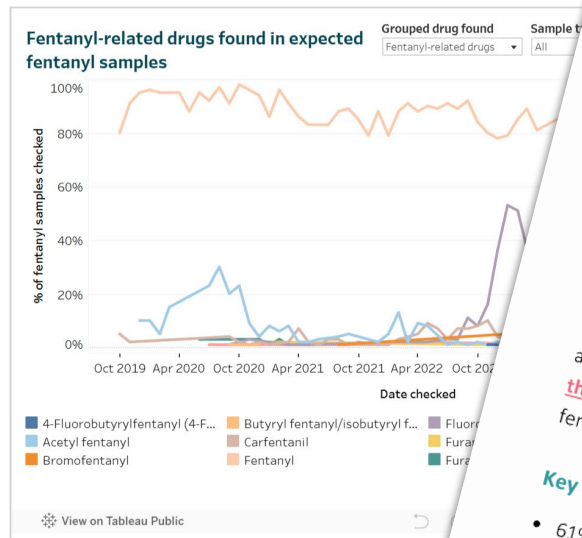
Take a minute to complete our survey, your feedback will help us

Reported

Centralized,
standardized,
comprehensive,
timely, and
accessible
unregulated drug
market monitoring
and education is
publicly
disseminated.

Individual noteworthy drug trends in expected fentanyl samples

This graph shows how often individual noteworthy drugs are found in samples expected to be fentanyl. It can be filtered by drug found group, sample type, and the month a sample was checked. For a specific drug group will display trends for all drugs within that category over time. For the fentanyl-related group will show the trends for all drugs classified as fentanyl-related. This includes samples where fentanyl was expected but not found.



Noteworthy drugs are drugs that (i) are linked to overdose deaths, (ii) are highly potent or related to highly potent drugs, or (iii) may not be fentanyl.

Number of high-potency opioids found in expected fentanyl samples

We classify an opioid "high-potency" if it is considered to be more potent than fentanyl. This graph shows how often samples expected to be fentanyl were found to contain high-potency opioids. It can be filtered by sample type and the month a sample was checked.



Ontario's Drug Checking Community

Unregulated fentanyl supply trends: Kingston, Ontario
December 2024

The **Integrated Care Hub** and its service users bring comprehensive, timely, and accessible market monitoring to Kingston by participating in Ontario's Drug Checking Community member.

Ontario's Drug Checking Community is implementing the offsite drug checking model designed for doing so is to inform evidence-based responses to the worsening toxic drug supply crisis. People who use drugs, community health workers, public health units, clinicians, first responders, makers, public servants, forensic science and toxicology laboratories, coroners, researchers, and others are about what's circulating in the unregulated drug supply and anticipated harms.

In December 2024, 35 samples¹ were collected from people who use drugs by the Integrated Care Hub. These samples were analyzed by analysis site members of Ontario's Drug Checking Community using **gold standard testing** that are validated for overdose prevention drug checking. Of these 35 samples, 28 were expected to be fentanyl.

Key findings

- 61% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ contained multiple high-potency opioids³, including **fluorofentanyl**, and/or a **methylfentanyl-related drug**. Using high-potency opioids³ in combination increases the risk of overdose and greater than normal doses of naloxone may be required to rouse individuals experiencing an overdose.
- 57% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ contained **fluorofentanyl** (at this time, we believe para-fluorofentanyl is circulating, which is considered to be as strong as fentanyl)
- 39% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ contained a **methylfentanyl-related drug** (considered to be up to 10 times stronger than fentanyl)
- 14% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ did not contain fentanyl – many of these samples instead contained fluorofentanyl and/or a methylfentanyl-related drug

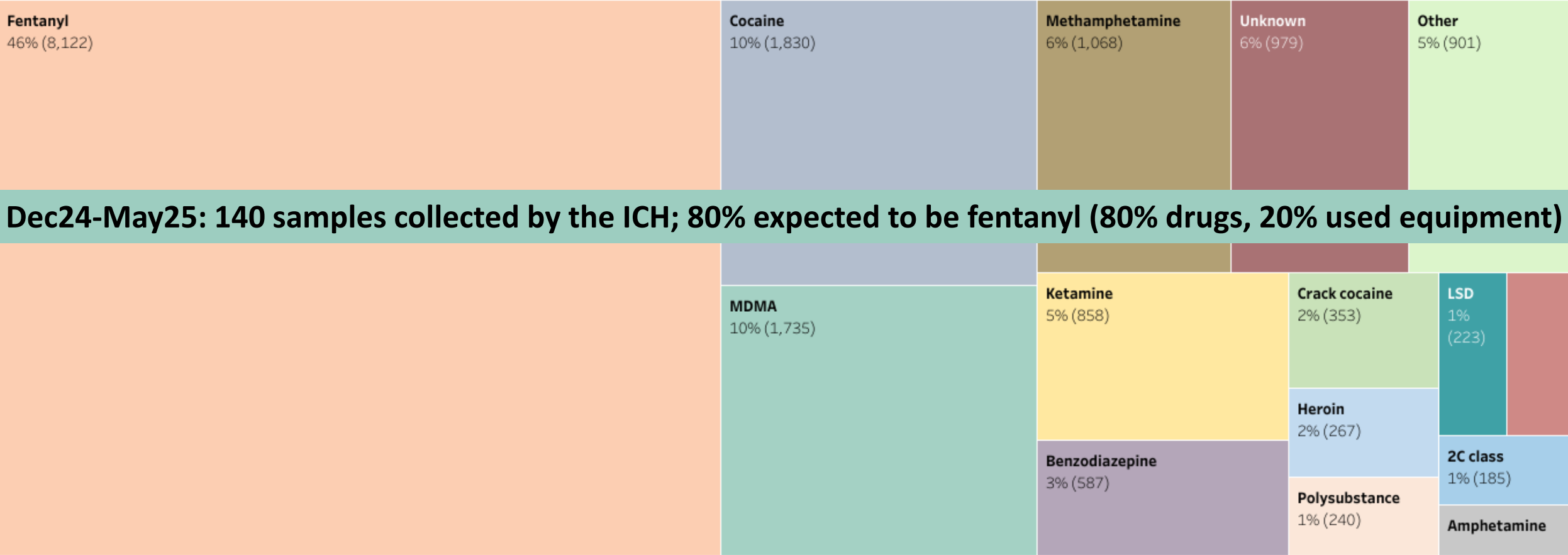
www.drugchecking.community

**What we're
finding**



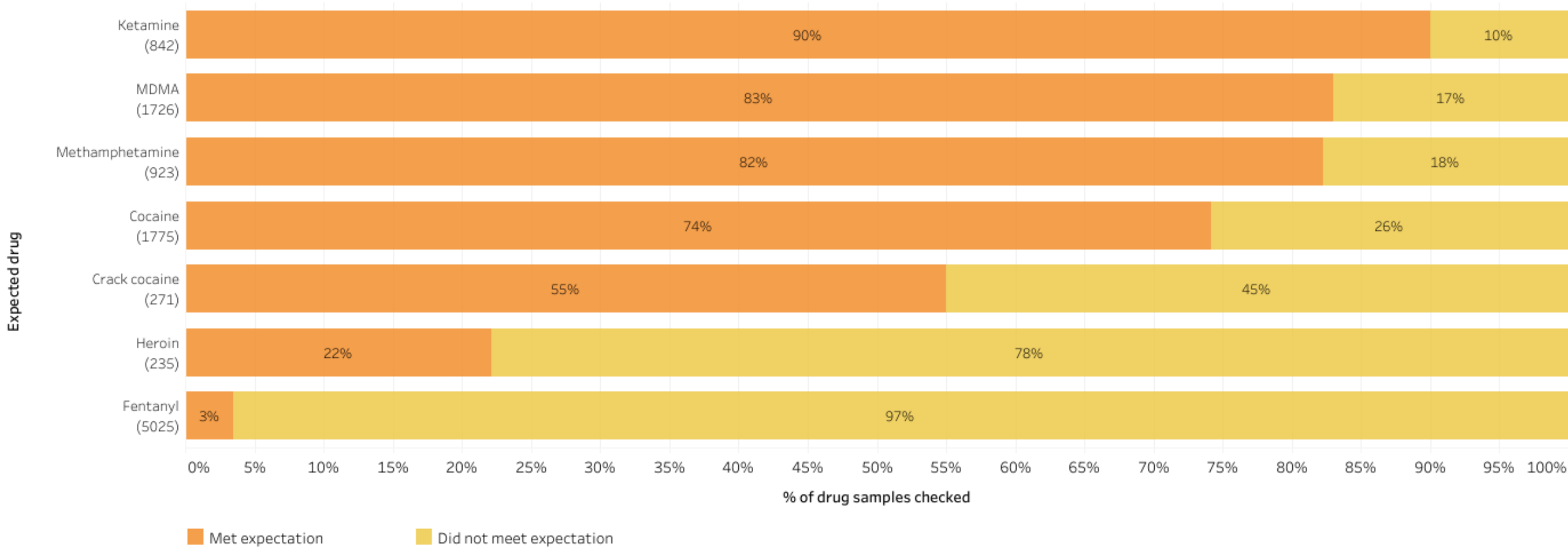
Checked samples by expected drug

17,707 samples checked | Toronto’s Drug Checking Service | Oct10/19 – May31/25



Frequency service user expectations are met

Toronto's Drug Checking Service | Oct10/19 – May31/25



Dec24-May25: Not a single fentanyl drug sample collected by the ICH met service user expectations

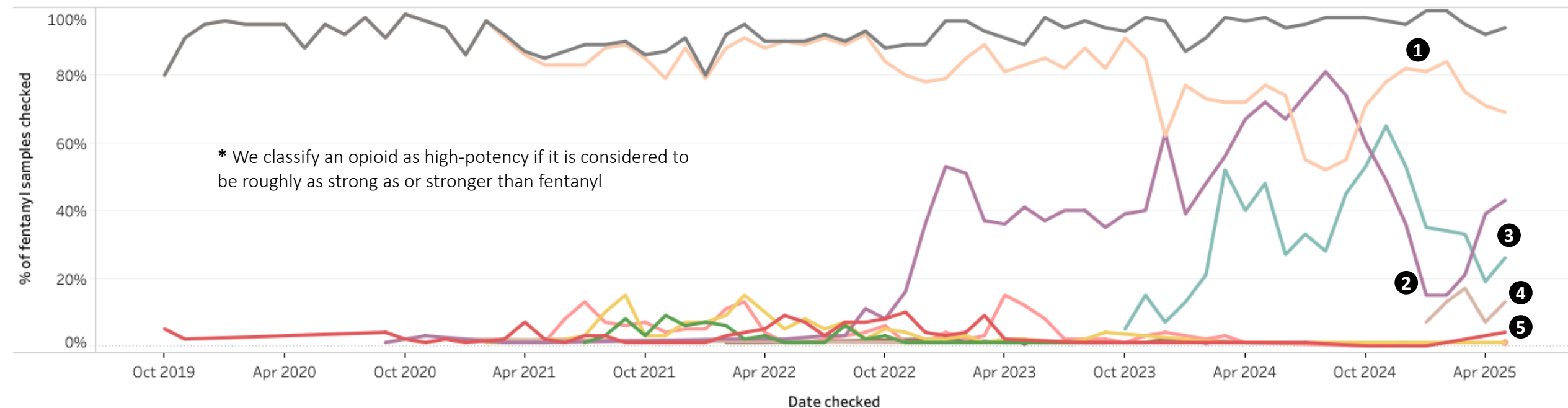
The unregulated fentanyl supply is contaminated.

It contains high-potency opioids and other central nervous system and/or respiratory depressants that aren't expected, increasing the risk of overdose and dangerous suppression of the vitals, while complicating overdose response.

High-potency opioids* found in expected fentanyl samples

Toronto's Drug Checking Service | Oct10/19 – May31/25

Dec24-May25: Similar trends in Kingston's unregulated fentanyl supply

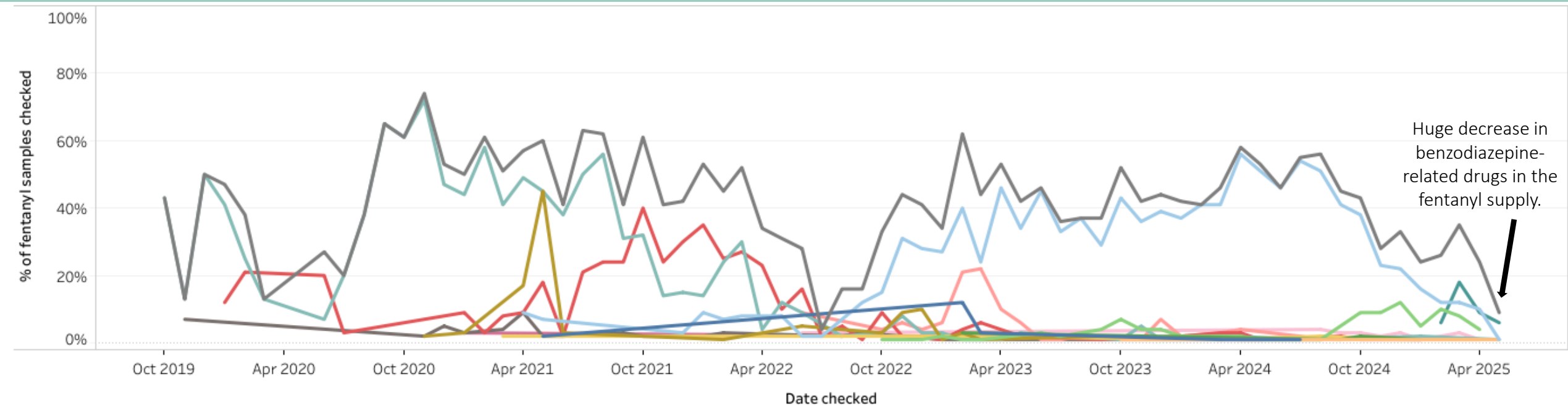


1. Resurgence of fentanyl proper
2. Steep decline in parafluorofentanyl, followed by a resurgence
3. Significant decline in ortho-methylfentanyl
4. Introduction of "new" nitazene opioids, protodesnitazene and metonitazepyne
5. Recent resurgence of carfentanyl

Benzodiazepine-related drugs found in expected fentanyl samples

Toronto's Drug Checking Service | Oct10/19 – May31/25

Dec24-May25: Six benzo-related drugs detected in Kingston's unregulated fentanyl supply



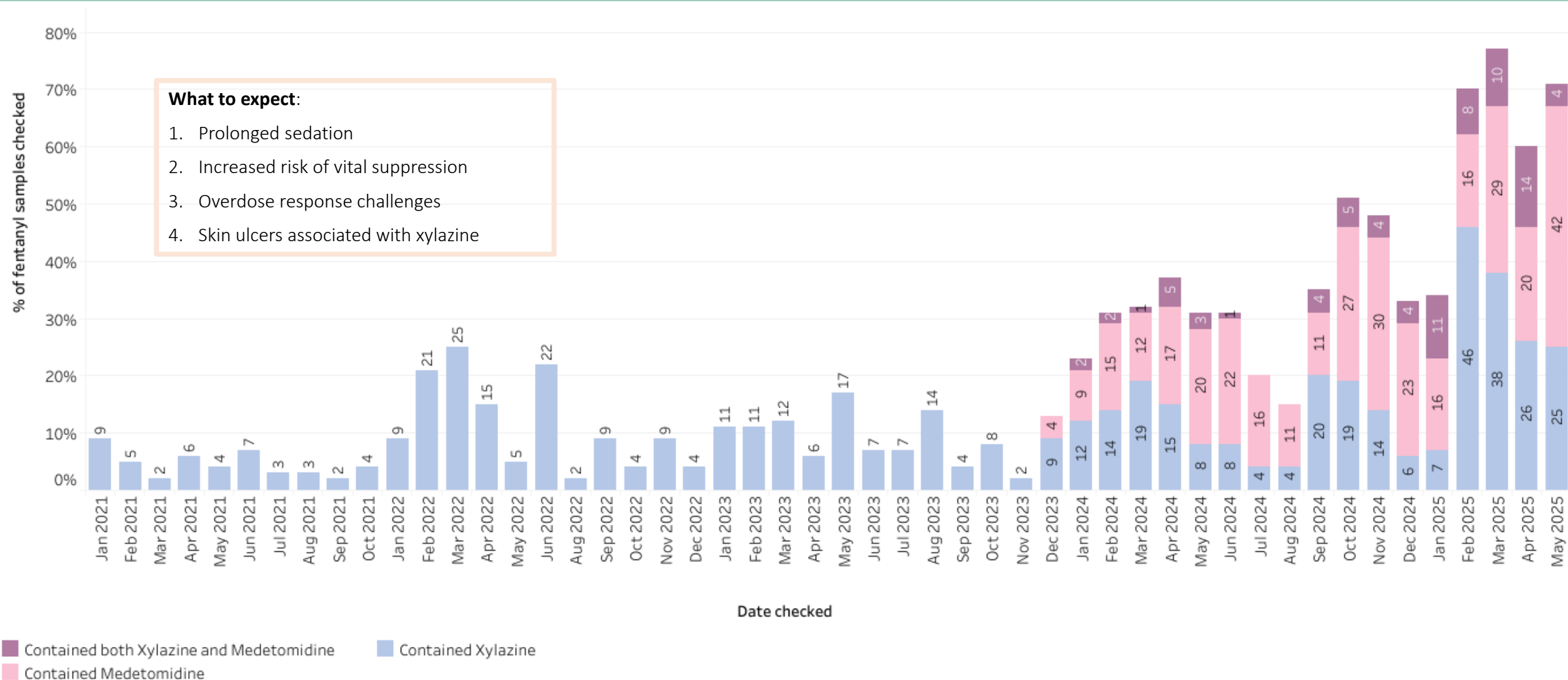
What to expect:

1. Prolonged sedation
2. Increased risk of vital suppression
3. Overdose response challenges
4. High potential for dependency

Veterinary tranquilizers found in expected fentanyl samples

Toronto's Drug Checking Service | Oct10/19 – May31/25

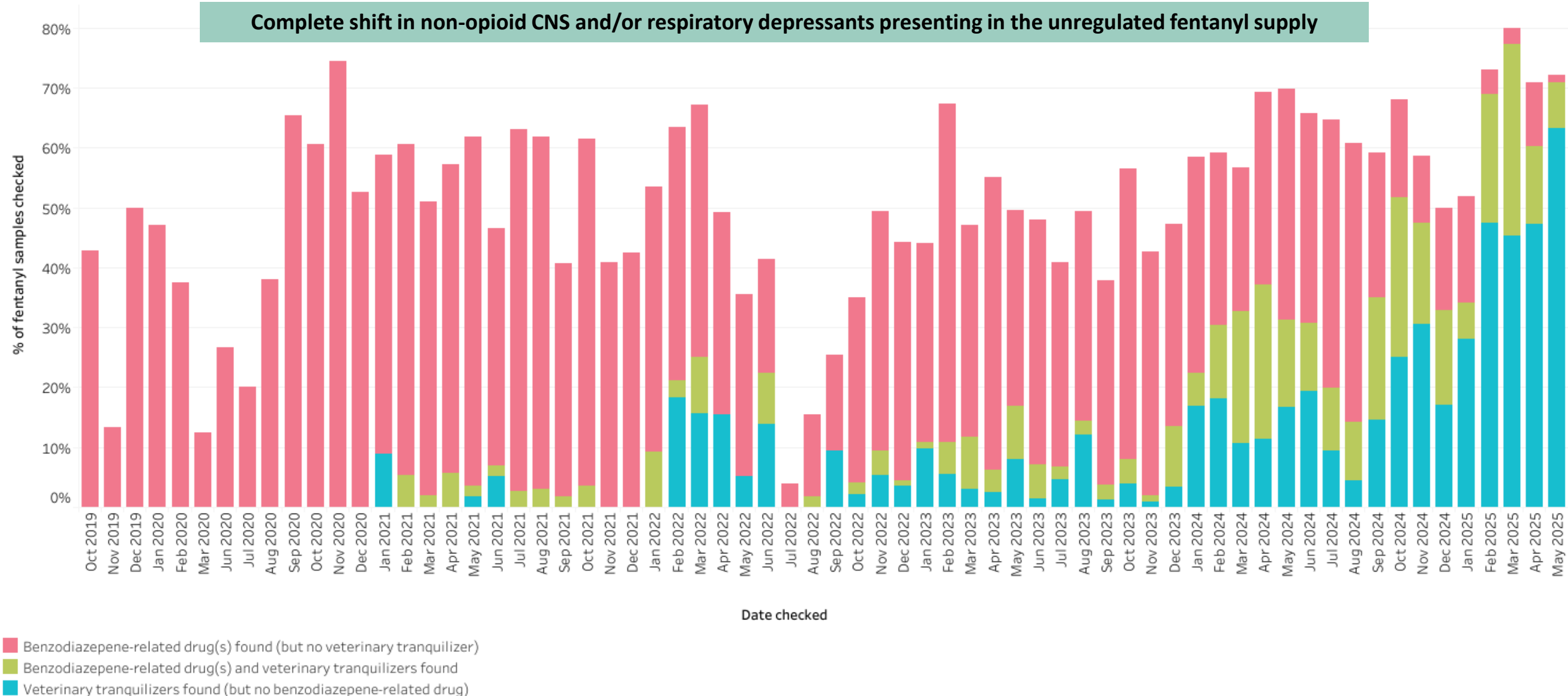
Dec24-May25: Similar trends in Kingston's unregulated fentanyl supply



Benzos and tranq in expected fentanyl samples

Toronto's Drug Checking Service | Oct10/19 – May31/25

Complete shift in non-opioid CNS and/or respiratory depressants presenting in the unregulated fentanyl supply



The unregulated fentanyl supply is unpredictable.

It contains unknown and inconsistent amounts of fentanyl and other high-potency opioids, making informed dosing decisions impossible, while increasing the risk of overdose and complicating overdose response.

Amount of fentanyl found

Aug1/20 – May31/25

www.drugchecking.community

Expected drug		Drug found		10 mg vs percent	Date checked	
Fentanyl		Fentanyl		% of total sample	(Multiple values)	
Month	# of drug samples	Average* amount found (%)	Amount found in 50% of the samples was between (%)	Minimum amount found (%)	Maximum amount found (%)	
All	3,046	3.4%	1.5% - 7.0%	0.1%	85.7%	
May 2025	50	1.0%	0.4% - 1.7%	0.2%	29.8%	
Apr 2025	63	0.6%	0.3% - 1.6%	0.1%	8.7%	
Mar 2025	114	1.4%	0.9% - 2.2%	0.1%	16.3%	
Feb 2025	163	1.6%	0.8% - 2.2%	0.1%	20.4%	
Jan 2025	137	2.0%	0.6% - 7.3%	0.1%	79.4%	
Dec 2024	91	1.3%	0.8% - 8.6%	0.1%	37.6%	
Nov 2024	113	0.7%	0.2% - 2.6%	0.1%	31.3%	
Oct 2024	109	1.3%	0.4% - 3.7%	0.1%	29.2%	
Sep 2024	32	3.4%	0.6% - 7.1%	0.4%	26.5%	
Aug 2024	41	5.0%	3.3% - 11.6%	0.3%	28.9%	
Jul 2024	50	4.4%	1.8% - 7.9%	0.3%	48.7%	
Jun 2024	63	3.2%	1.0% - 6.5%	0.3%	49.0%	
May 2024	54	2.8%	1.4% - 5.7%	0.1%	59.6%	
Apr 2024	61	4.9%	1.9% - 9.7%	0.4%	36.0%	
Mar 2024	47	5.8%	1.5% - 8.0%	0.1%	14.9%	
Feb 2024	38	4.7%	2.9% - 8.2%	0.3%	70.6%	
Jan 2024	90	6.0%	2.9% - 12.9%	0.3%	83.1%	

vs

vs

View on Tableau Public

Share

MYTH

Fentanyl and high-potency opioids are frequently found in other drug types, like stimulants and psychedelics

8,084
drug samples
checked that were
not expected to be
opioids

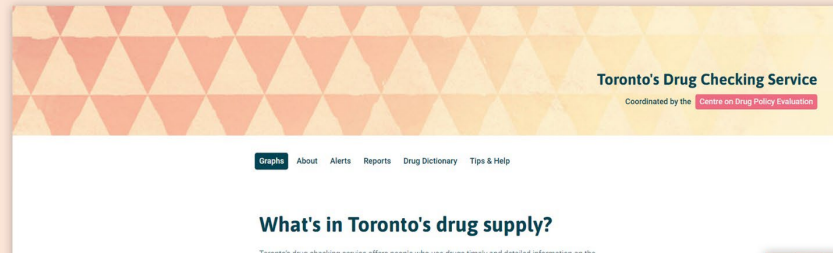
High-potency opioids found in other drug types

Oct10/19 – May31/25 | www.drugchecking.community

11
with **confirmed**
high-potency opioid
contamination

1 of 1,830 cocaine drug samples
1 of 1,735 MDMA drug samples
6 of 1,068 methamphetamine drug samples
1 of 858 ketamine drug samples
1 of 587 benzodiazepine drug samples
1 of 353 crack cocaine drug samples

www.drugchecking.community



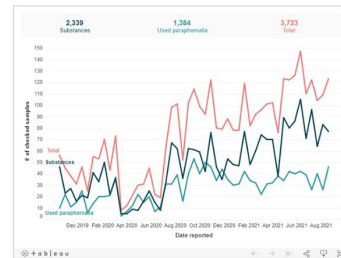
Toronto's drug checking service offers people who use drugs timely and detailed information on the contents of their drugs, helping them to make more informed decisions.

This service also shares information on Toronto's unregulated drug supply with harm reduction workers and clinicians to help them tailor the care they provide to people who use drugs, while informing research and policy.

Every other week, results from samples checked by Toronto's drug checking service are combined and presented using the graphs below. [Sign up](#) to be notified when new data is available.

Checked samples by sample type

Two types of samples are accepted by this drug checking service: substances and used paraphernalia. This graph shows how many samples have been checked since the launch of Toronto's drug checking service – in total and by sample type.

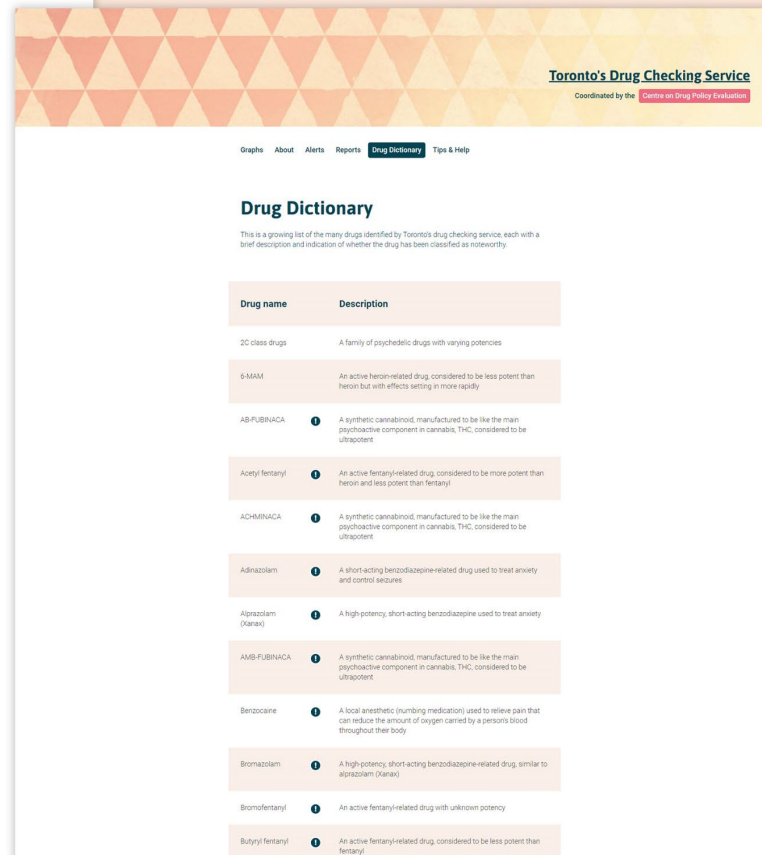
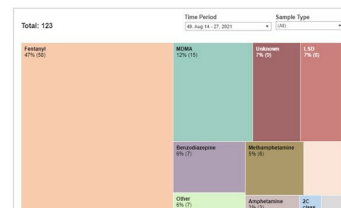


Substances could be a small amount of powder, a crushed bit of a pill, blotter, or a small amount of liquid.

Used paraphernalia could be a used cooker or filter, or leftover liquid from a syringe.

Checked samples by expected drug

When a sample is submitted to be checked, the drug that sample is expected to contain is recorded (and is known as the **"expected drug"**). This graph shows which drugs were expected for samples checked. It can be filtered by sample type and the time period during which a sample was checked.



Toronto's Drug Checking Service

Unregulated fentanyl supply trends: Toronto, Ontario

May 17 – 30, 2025

Between **May 17 and 30, 2025**, 86 samples¹ were collected from people who use drugs by the collection site members of **Toronto's Drug Checking Service**, the flagship program of Ontario's Drug Checking Community. Samples were analyzed by analysis site members of the program using **gold standard technologies that are validated for overdose prevention drug checking**. Of these 86 samples¹, 38 were expected² to be fentanyl (76% were drug samples³ and 24% were used drug equipment).

Key findings⁴

- 5% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ were known to be **associated with an overdose** – these samples contained a high-potency opioid⁵ (an opioid considered to be roughly as strong as or stronger than fentanyl) and a veterinary tranquilizer
- 39% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained multiple high-potency opioids⁵**, including **fentanyl**, **fluorofentanyl**, a **methylfentanyl-related drug**, **carfentanil**, and/or **protodesnitazene**
- 76% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained a veterinary tranquilizer** – 63% contained **medetomidine** and 26% contained **xylazine**
- 58% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained fluorofentanyl** (at this time, we believe para-fluorofentanyl is circulating, which is considered to be roughly as strong as fentanyl)
- 24% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained a methylfentanyl-related drug** (at this time, we believe ortho-methylfentanyl is circulating, which is considered to be roughly as strong as fentanyl)
- 13% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained a benzodiazepine-related drug**, namely, **ethylbromazolam** and/or **bromazolam**
- 8% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained carfentanil** (considered to be up to 100 times stronger than fentanyl) – **we are observing a resurgence of carfentanil in Toronto's unregulated fentanyl, heroin, and down supplies**
- 8% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained a nitazene opioid**, namely, protodesnitazene (considered to be as strong as fentanyl) or a "new" nitazene opioid **metonitazepine** (considered to be 2 times stronger than fentanyl)

- 39% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **did not contain fentanyl** – many of these samples instead contained fluorofentanyl, a methylfentanyl-related drug, and/or carfentanil
- Amount of drugs found in expected² fentanyl drug samples³:

In 15 expected² fentanyl drug samples³:
1.5% was the **average amount⁶ of fentanyl found** **0.9 – 2.7%** was the **range⁷ of fentanyl found** in half of the drug samples³

In 16 expected² fentanyl drug samples³:
2.3% was the **average amount⁶ of fluorofentanyl found** **0.4 – 7.8%** was the **range⁷ of fluorofentanyl found** in half of the drug samples³

In 6 expected² fentanyl drug samples³:
0.4% was the **average amount⁶ of methylfentanyl-related drugs found** **0.2 – 1.9%** was the **range⁷ of methylfentanyl-related drugs found** in half of the drug samples³

In 15 expected² fentanyl drug samples³:
0.4% was the **average amount⁶ of medetomidine found** **0.4 – 1.1%** was the **range⁷ of medetomidine found** in half of the drug samples³

In 6 expected² fentanyl drug samples³:
0.2% was the **average amount⁶ of xylazine found** **0.2 – 1.1%** was the **range⁷ of xylazine found** in half of the drug samples³

Expected fentanyl drug samples

- 55% (16) of the expected² fentanyl drug samples³ **contained fentanyl and other drugs**, including:
 - 94% (15) contained caffeine
 - 94% (15) contained a veterinary tranquilizer:
 - 75% (12) contained medetomidine (!)
 - 38% (6) contained xylazine (!)
 - 56% (9) contained at least one additional high-potency opioid⁵:
 - 44% (7) contained fluorofentanyl (!)
 - 31% (5) contained a methylfentanyl-related drug (!)
 - 13% (2) contained carfentanil (!)
 - 6% (1) contained metonitazepine (!)
 - 19% (3) contained at least one benzodiazepine-related drug:
 - 13% (2) contained ethylbromazolam (!)
 - 6% (1) contained bromazolam (!)
 - 6% (1) contained **acetyl fentanyl** (!)

Written report
(Bi-weekly for sites in Toronto)

Ontario's Drug Checking Community

v1

Unregulated fentanyl supply trends: Kingston, Ontario

April 2025

The [Integrated Care Hub](#) and its service users bring comprehensive, timely, and accessible unregulated drug market monitoring to Kingston by participating in Ontario's Drug Checking Community as a collection site member.

Ontario's Drug Checking Community is a national leader in drug checking service delivery and community-led unregulated drug market monitoring and education. Comprised of a group of members, the program involves implementing the offsite drug checking model designed and in use by [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) since 2019 in other jurisdictions across the province. The primary reason for doing so is to inform evidence-based responses to the worsening toxic drug supply crisis by educating people who use drugs, community health workers, public health units, clinicians, first responders, policy makers, public servants, forensic science and toxicology laboratories, coroners, researchers, and others about what's circulating in the unregulated drug supply and anticipated harms.

In April 2025, 25 samples¹ were collected from people who use drugs by the Integrated Care Hub and analyzed by analysis site members of Ontario's Drug Checking Community using [gold standard technologies that are validated for overdose prevention drug checking](#). Of these 25 samples¹, 22 were expected² to be fentanyl (77% of these were drug samples, 23% were used drug equipment).

Key findings³

- One of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ was known to be **associated with an overdose** – it contained fentanyl and fentanyl-related drugs in combination with a benzodiazepine-related drug
- 82% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained multiple high-potency opioids⁴**, including [fentanyl](#), a [methyلفentanyl-related drug](#), [fluorofentanyl](#), and/or [protodesnitazene](#). Using high-potency opioids⁴ in combination increases the risk of overdose and greater than normal doses of naloxone may be required to rouse individuals experiencing an overdose.
- 73% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained a methyلفentanyl-related drug** (at this time, we believe ortho-methyلفentanyl is circulating, which is considered to be as strong as fentanyl)
- 59% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained fluorofentanyl** (at this time, we believe para-fluorofentanyl is circulating, which is considered to be as strong as fentanyl)

- 23% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained high-potency⁴ nitazene opioid** protodesnitazene (considered to be as strong as fentanyl)
- 23% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **did not contain fentanyl** – many of these samples instead contained a methyلفentanyl-related drug, fluorofentanyl, and/or protodesnitazene
- 86% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained at least one other central nervous and/or respiratory system depressant**, including veterinary tranquilizers and/or benzodiazepine-related drugs. Using high-potency opioids⁴ in combination with other central nervous and/or respiratory system depressants increases the risk of dangerous suppression of vitals (e.g., slowing down of breathing, blood pressure, heart rate).
 - 68% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained a benzodiazepine-related drug**, namely [desalkylgidazepam](#), [ethylbromazolam](#), [flualprazolam](#), and/or [bromazolam](#)
 - 50% of the expected² fentanyl samples¹ **contained a veterinary tranquilizer** – 36% contained [xylazine](#) and 32% contained [medetomidine](#)
- Other samples checked were expected² to be methamphetamine (2) or amphetamine (1). Unexpected noteworthy drug⁶ fentanyl was detected in one of the expected² methamphetamine samples, however we would not classify this as contamination: this was a used equipment sample, expected drug² methamphetamine was not detected, and the sample represented that of expected² fentanyl.

Not sure what some of these substances are? View our drug dictionary: www.drugchecking.community/drug-dictionary/

Notes

1 | Samples: Includes both drugs and used drug equipment. Drugs could be a very small amount of powder, crystals, rocks, blotter, liquid, or a crushed bit of a pill. Used equipment could be a used cooker or filter, or leftover liquid from a syringe. For more information, view our [terms of service](#).

Expected (drug): When a sample is submitted to be checked, the drug that sample was bought or got as is recorded. We call it "expected drug". Knowing the expected drug helps us tailor our harm reduction advice. It also helps us understand contamination to drugs rather than combinations of drugs (e.g., fentanyl was found in a heroin sample rather than fentanyl and heroin were found together).

Key findings for the specified time period are based on results from both drugs and used drug equipment. **There are no findings associated with including results from used drug equipment samples in unregulated drug market monitoring for a specified time period.** Drug equipment – like cookers – are often re-used. The [mass spectrometry technologies we use](#) are so sensitive that very trace amounts of substances may be found. This means that when equipment is re-used, substances from past use are found and included in results for the sample that is being checked. This can compromise the accuracy of drug market monitoring for a specified time period. For example, the substance was found in the used equipment sample from a past time period, is that substance circulating in the supply now or when the equipment was used? This is why we prefer to rely on results from drug samples for time period.

Written report
(Monthly for sites outside of Toronto)



January 25 – February 7, 2025

Bi-weekly report

Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 206 samples checked.



January 11 – 24, 2025

Bi-weekly report

Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 163 samples checked.



December 28, 2024 – January 10, 2025

Bi-weekly report

Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 211 samples checked.



December 14 – 27, 2024

Bi-weekly report

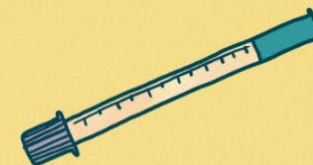
Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 145 samples checked.



November 30 – December 13, 2024

Bi-weekly report

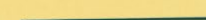
Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 144 samples checked.



November 16 – 29, 2024

Bi-weekly report

Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 222 samples checked.



November 2 – 15, 2024

Bi-weekly report

Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 236 samples checked.



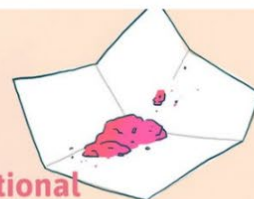
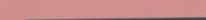
October 19 – November 1, 2024

Bi-weekly report

Toronto's Drug Checking Service shares information on the composition of the unregulated drug supply every other week. Here are some highlights from 195 samples checked.



Changes to quantified analysis results



International Drug Users Day

October 5 – 18, 2024

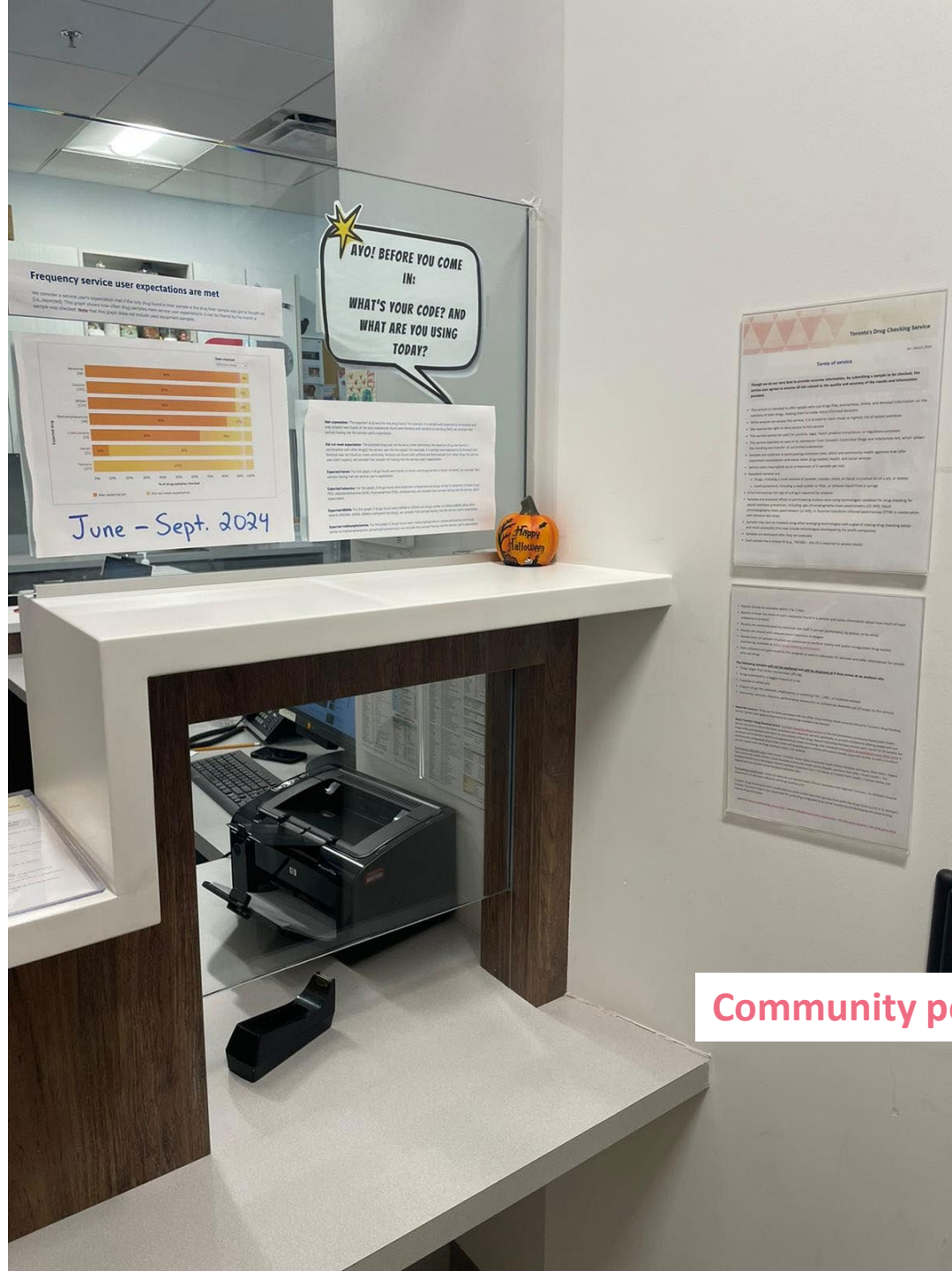


September 21 –

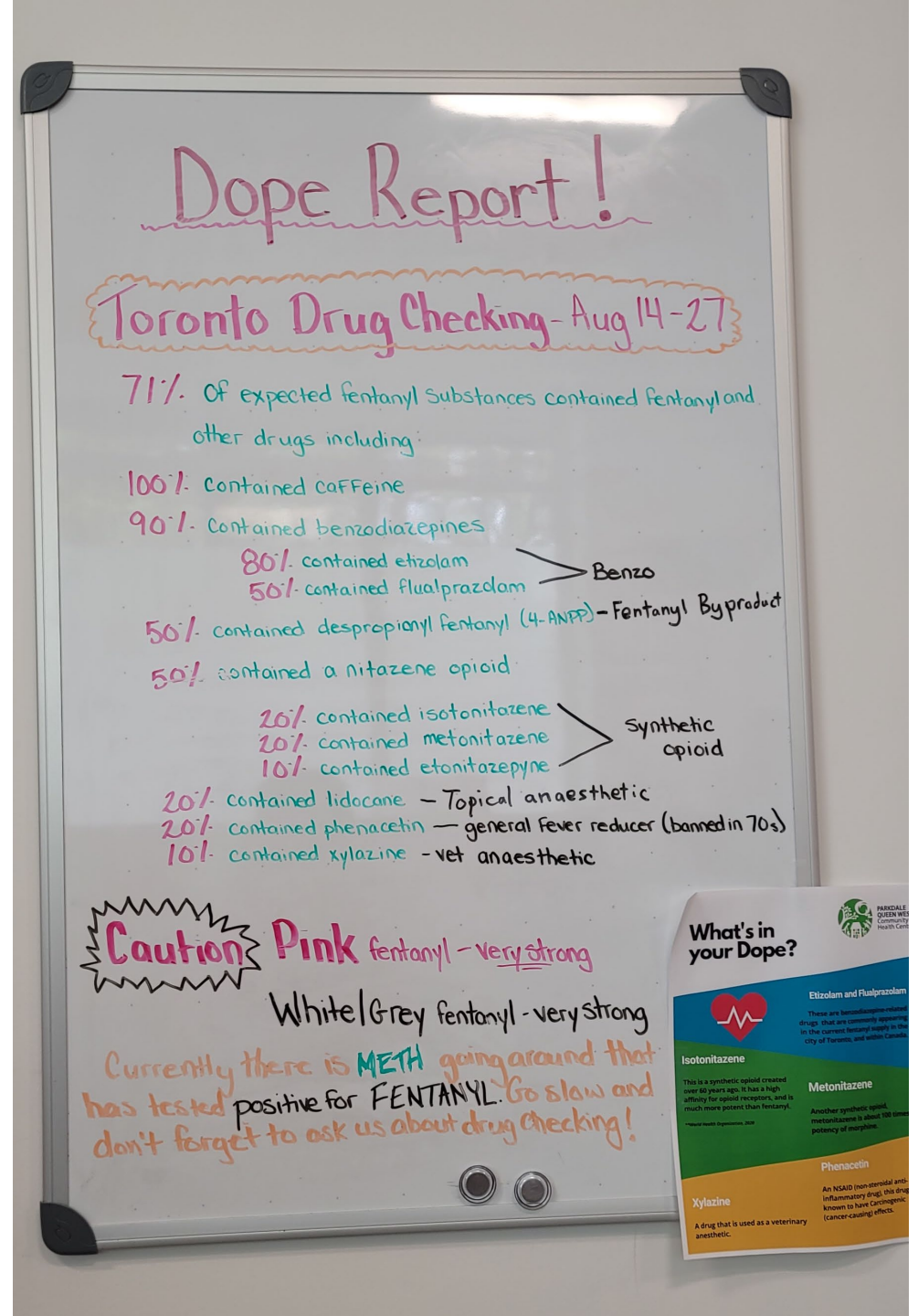


Instagram

[@drugchecking](https://www.instagram.com/drugchecking)



Community posting



Drug Alert: Increase in Drug-Related Deaths & Nitazene Opioids in Toronto's Unregulated Opioid Supply

March 18, 2024

Why are we sending this alert?

- There was an **increase in suspected opioid overdose-related deaths** attended by Toronto Paramedic Services between March 14-17, 2024.
 - During this period, preliminary data shows that there were **6 suspected opioid overdose-related deaths**, which is triple the current average seen for a 4-day period in the past 12 weeks.

Additional Information

- There is no additional information available at this time about the specific drugs connected to these overdose related deaths.
- [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) recently identified **two** "new" high potency synthetic nitazene opioids in Toronto's unregulated opioid supply: **N-desethyl etonitazene** (10 times stronger than fentanyl) and **protonitazepyne** (20 times stronger than fentanyl) and observed an **increase in the presence of** nitazene opioids in samples expected to be **oxycodone** (OxyContin), **hydromorphone** (Dilaudid), **hydrocodone**, and **Percocet**.
 - Since nitazene opioids are potent, the risk of overdose is increased and greater than normal doses of naloxone may be required to rouse individuals experiencing an overdose.
 - The risk of overdose may be further increased for people who use oxycodone (OxyContin), Percocet, hydromorphone (Dilaudid), or hydrocodone, as compared to people who use fentanyl, because their opioid tolerance may be lower.
- Overdoses are occurring **throughout the city**.

Messages for people using drugs in Toronto:

- Try not to use alone.** Buddy up with someone who you trust.
- Keep naloxone on-hand.**
 - Kits are available at Toronto Public Health, The Works, and through many [partner organizations](#). Free naloxone kits are also available at some pharmacies. Visit www.ontario.ca/page/get-naloxone-kits-free or call 1-800-565-8603.
 - Benzodiazepines in the unregulated drug supply may cause people to be sedated longer than usual. Following naloxone administration, some people may remain unconscious even after their breathing returns.
- Use a supervised consumption service, if possible.** For locations and hours of sites please visit: toronto.ca/ConsumptionServices.
- If you must use alone, have a safety plan.**

Toronto

Surge in fatal suspected overdoses as potent synthetic opioids found in unregulated drug supply: TPH

6 fatal suspected opioid overdoses recorded between March 14 and 17, public health says

CBC News · Posted: Mar 19, 2024 9:32 AM EDT | Last Updated: March 19



Toronto Public Health cautioned Monday that two powerful synthetic opioids were recently found in the city's unregulated drug supply. (Cole Burston/The Canadian Press)

Health officials are warning of a surge in suspected overdose deaths in Toronto as two powerful synthetic opioids were recently found in the unregulated drug supply.

Toronto Public Health (TPH) said Monday that paramedics responded to six fatal suspected overdoses between March 14 and 17, about triple the average over four-day spans in the last three months.

The overdoses happened in various parts of the city, TPH said.

Toronto's Drug Checking Service, a free program funded by different levels of government, discovered the presence of two highly potent synthetic opioids, called nitazene opioids, in samples taken from the street supply of drugs. One of the nitazene opioids is about 10 times stronger than fentanyl, while the other is roughly 20 times more potent.

**Why this
matters**



Access to Ontario's Drug Checking Community...

- Provides potentially life-saving information to those at highest risk of overdose
- Provides people who use drugs with a new gateway to accessing drug-related, health, and social services (including treatment)
- Facilitates behaviour change that reduces the risk of overdose
- Is valuable to people who use drugs, empowering them to advocate for themselves and help develop solutions that impact them

Drug marketing monitoring and education efforts by Ontario's Drug Checking Community are applied and strongly supported by many health and social service providers, such as:

- **Ontario's public health units**, who use the program's findings to educate their communities about trends in their local unregulated drug supply and how to reduce harm
- The **Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario**, **META:PHI**, and **Ontario Poison Centre**, who use the program's findings to inform care plans (including medication choices and doses), understand their patients' withdrawal symptoms and tolerance, engage their patients in more meaningful care, and tailor treatments
- The **Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police**, who use the program's findings to build better community relations and develop more effective strategies to handle drug-related incidents
- The **Chief Coroner of Ontario**, who uses the program's findings to contextualize trends in drug-related death investigations
- **LifeLabs**, who uses the program's findings to improve clinical care tools, such as urine drug screens

In closing...

- Except in rare cases, fentanyl is not the contaminant, it's what is being contaminated.
- The fentanyl supply is increasingly more contaminated and less predictable because it is not regulated.
- Community-led drug market monitoring programs are the most timely and accessible source of information on the unregulated drug supply.
- A timely and accessible understanding of what's circulating in the unregulated drug supply is critical to prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and public safety.
- Our goal is to establish at least one collection site in each of Ontario's 29 public health unit jurisdictions for local and provincial community-led unregulated drug market monitoring.



Thank you!

With general questions or comments, reach the program's central operating team at hello@drugchecking.community.

Interact with our data and access our resources at www.drugchecking.community and follow us on IG [@drugchecking](https://www.instagram.com/drugchecking).

Are you a community or public health agency in Ontario offering or interested in offering drug checking? Join Ontario's Drug Checking Community of Practice!