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ADAP Advocacy Calls for More Awareness on Counterfeit Medicines

Counterfeit pill availability in the United States is increasing, including recent incidents involving HIV medications

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – ADAP Advocacy, in collaboration with the Partnership for Safe Medicines (PSM), is calling for more awareness over counterfeit medicines in the United States. Data recently shared in the MMWR [*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*] [highlights a growing problem](#), which is potentially contributing to overdose deaths. Aside from some high-profile cases involving criminal enterprises pushing fake HIV medications, counterfeit pill availability is rising in the drug supply chain, but also the illicit drug market.

Summarized **ADAP Advocacy Association's CEO, Brandon M. Macsata**: "Unlike counterfeit opioid pills which often kill instantly, counterfeit HIV medications will victimize patients silently and slowly. Treatment failure, with a whole host of health events, will be the only clue a patient and their physician will notice. Because the U.S. medicine supply is the safest in the world, they may not even suspect counterfeit HIV medicine."

Macsata further noted that ADAP Advocacy is deeply concerned with the findings highlighted in the *MMWR* and they support the need for better overdose prevention messaging. The growing presence of counterfeit pills, often resembling the authentic pills manufactured by pharmaceutical companies, are clearly "complicating the illicit drug market and potentially contributing to these deaths."

Shabbir Imber Safdar, Executive Director of the Partnership for Safe Medicines, and ADAP Advocacy board member, added: "In the last year we've seen foreign counterfeiters attempt to fool Americans with counterfeit versions of medicines used to treat heart conditions, HIV, cancer, and arthritis, all with English packaging. But we've also seen innovative successes in patient safety, including shutting down criminals who sell fake HIV meds with trademark infringement lawsuits and using the Drug Supply Chain Security Act to detect fraudulent product. The stakes are higher than they've ever been, but we're seeing success on the enforcement side as well."

ADAP Advocacy and PSM have been collaborating for several years on raising awareness about the dangers behind counterfeit medications – including blogs, infographics, video alerts, and policy briefings. They've included:

- [Why a Secure Drug Supply Chain Matters](#) (blog published December 2022)
- [How to Spot Fake HIV Medicines](#) (infographic posted November 2022)
- [ALERT: Fake HIV Meds in U.S.](#) (video alert posted March 2022)
- [Supply Chain Breaks Harm HIV Patients](#) (policy briefing held March 2023)

Information about drug overdose deaths with evidence of counterfeit pill use made available by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) can be read online at

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7235a3.htm>.

To learn more about ADAP Advocacy, AIDS Drug Assistance Programs, or counterfeit medicines, please email info@adapadvocacy.org.

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About ADAP Advocacy: The ADAP Advocacy mission is to promote and enhance the AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs) and improve access to care for persons living with HIV/AIDS. ADAP Advocacy works with advocates, community, health care, government, patients, pharmaceutical companies, and other stakeholders to raise awareness, offer patient educational programs, and foster greater community collaboration.

About the Partnership for Safe Medicines (PSM): PSM is a public health group committed to the safety of prescription drugs and protecting consumers against counterfeit, substandard or otherwise unsafe medicines.