



Maine Drug Monitoring Initiative

Maine Information and Analysis Center



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(U) Purpose: *This Maine Drug Monitoring Initiative (DMI) report is a collection of information obtained from various sources and partners, including but not limited to public health, law enforcement, and EMS. The MIAC welcomes the sharing of information that your agency believes may be beneficial to this report and to other agencies.*

(U) PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS

(U) Xylazine Trends

(U) The Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) 2025 National Drug Assessment reports that xylazine is a non-opioid sedative, analgesic, and muscle relaxant approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for veterinary use only. However, it is increasingly present in the United States (U.S.) illicit drug markets. Commonly mixed with fentanyl or other opioids such as heroin, and sometimes cocaine, xylazine is often added by traffickers to enhance or alter drug effects, resulting in the dangerous mixture known as "tranq." Because xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone cannot reverse its effects, and users face a heightened risk of fatal overdose and severe injection-related infections, including necrosis that may lead to amputation. DEA forensic laboratories report that the number of heroin and fentanyl exhibits contaminated with xylazine is increasing and spreading outside traditional white powder heroin and fentanyl markets in the eastern U.S., where xylazine has been present for several years. Xylazine is most widespread in drug samples seized in New Jersey, Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Florida, but has been identified in seized drug samples in every U.S. state, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.¹

(U) A recent National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS) special report states that there were 1,039 EMS encounters for nonfatal xylazine-related overdoses from 1 January 2024 to 30 September 2025. The 10 U.S. counties with the highest rates were located in the Northeastern region, particularly in Pennsylvania. The data shows a statistically significant overall increase in EMS encounters for nonfatal xylazine-related overdoses across the U.S. during this time period.²

(U) Social media platforms like Reddit offer valuable insight into emerging trends in the use of new psychoactive substances (NPS). The NDEWS Coordinating Center developed an online monitoring platform that tracks drug-related discussions across 80 subreddits using machine learning and keyword analysis. This system identifies anomalous activity that may signal the emergence of new substances, and validation studies show that NPS detected through Reddit discussions often appear later in toxicology and other real-world data. Early online detection provides a powerful tool for public health monitoring and rapid response.³ Recent reports from online substance use communities, particularly Reddit, indicate increasing awareness of xylazine's presence and its severe health consequences. Users describe extreme, prolonged sedation or "blackouts," necrotic wounds at injection sites, and a distinct withdrawal syndrome separate from opioids that can cause dangerous blood pressure fluctuations, severe anxiety, and even seizures. Because naloxone does not reverse xylazine's effects, overdoses present unique treatment challenges. Online discussions show that people who use drugs are employing harm reduction strategies such as xylazine test strips and peer information-sharing to avoid contaminated supplies, though many note that health care and detox providers are often unprepared to manage xylazine-related withdrawal and complications. These findings highlight the growing public health threat posed by xylazine contamination in the illicit drug market.⁴

(U) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND NEWS:

(U) Maine Drug Data Hub Monthly Overdose Data

(U) The most recent monthly overdose report available from the Maine Drug Data Hub reports that fatal overdoses in Maine continue to decline. The total number of confirmed and suspected fatal overdoses during 2025 is 263, 23.8% lower than the total confirmed fatal overdoses for January–August 2024. For additional information, please visit [Maine Monthly Overdose Report for August 2025](#)

(U) Governor Mills Monthly Opioid Response Seminar Series

(U) Governor Mills’ Monthly Opioid Response Webinar Series will continue on 7 November from 11:30am to 12:30pm and will feature a presentation of the relevant data in the 2024 Annual Report of the state’s Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP). The webinars are held on the first Friday of every month from now until the Governor’s 8th Annual Opioid Response Summit in Bangor on 16 July 2026. For additional information, please visit [Summary - Governor's Office Opioid Response Seminar Series \(November ME#802/880\)](#)

(U) Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) Trends, Analysis and Threats Webinar

(U) Hear from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Testing Laboratory and the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) during the last ORS Trends, Analysis and Threats webinar in 2025. Open to anyone in public safety, public health and overdose response and prevention. These bi-monthly webinars highlight the current and emerging drug trends from forensic and toxicology labs. The next webinar will be held on 5 November 2025 from 2:00-3:00pm EST. For additional information or to register, please visit [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

(U) U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Strategic Priorities

(U) On 17 September, the U.S. CDC released its strategic priorities, focusing on strengthening public health infrastructure, enhancing vaccine safety, improving emergency response and advancing research to better protect communities in the U.S. and globally. For additional information, please visit [CDC priorities | About CDC | CDC](#)

(U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Updated Strategic Priorities

(U) SAMHSA published an updated guide outlining its strategic priorities. This framework will guide efforts to address mental health challenges and substance use disorder (SUD) nationwide. The document also highlights five core work areas, three cross-cutting principles and key outcomes to track SAMHSA’s impact. For additional information, please visit [SAMHSA Strategic Priorities | SAMHSA](#)

(U) Surgeons Handle New and Alarming Pathology – Xylazine Wounds

(U) A recently published article in the Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons by Newman highlights the complications faced by surgeons treating wounds caused by xylazine use. The

article reports that xylazine is being found to be a contaminant in the illicit fentanyl supply. Xylazine use can lead to severe, necrotic wounds that can cause amputations and severe necrotizing fasciitis. The article emphasizes the need for surgeons to understand and effectively treat these wounds. For additional information, please visit [Surgeons Handle New and Alarming Pathology—Xylazine Wounds | ACS](#)

(U) National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS) Special Report: EMS Encounters for Nonfatal Ketamine-Related Overdoses in the U.S.

(U) Out of 8,793 EMS encounters for nonfatal ketamine-related overdoses from 1 January 2024 to 30 September 2025, 909 (10.3%) occurred in Northeastern states. The data shows a significant increase in EMS encounters for ketamine-related overdoses across Western, Midwestern, Northeastern and Southern states, and nationally overall. For additional information, please visit [10.3.25 NDEWS-2025-ketamine-related-overdoses](#)

(U) Ortho-Methylfentanyl Proliferating Across North America As Newest Synthetic Opioid Identified in Fatal Drug Overdoses

(U) The Center for Forensic Research and Education (CFSRE) reports that ortho-methylfentanyl has been increasingly appearing in the North American recreational drug supply. The CRSRE's lab first detected the substance, which is similar to fentanyl, in Canada in November 2023. For additional information, please visit [Public Alert ortho-Methylfentanyl 120224.pdf](#)

(U) American Veterinary Medical Association: Health Officials Finding Different Illicit Veterinary Sedative in US Drug Supply

(U) Illicit medetomidine bulk powder has emerged as a dangerous adulterant in the U.S. illegal drug supply, often mixed with other illicit drugs such as fentanyl or heroin. First identified in Maryland in 2022, illicit medetomidine bulk powder quickly spread to California, Colorado, Illinois, Missouri, and Pennsylvania, culminating in overdose clusters in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, by early 2025, according to the findings in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1 May edition of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. For additional information, please visit [Health officials finding different illicit veterinary sedative in US drug supply | American Veterinary Medical Association](#)

(U) Three Arrested After Drug Raids in Lewiston and New Gloucester, Maine

(U) Three people were arrested in connection with a monthlong drug investigation, the Maine Department of Public Safety said. Maine Drug Enforcement Agency agents, with help from the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office Emergency Services Unit and the South Portland Police Department's Southern Maine Regional SWAT Team, executed a search warrant at a residence Lewiston and New Gloucester, Maine. For additional information, please visit [Lewiston and New Gloucester drug raids lead to three arrests | newscentermaine.com](#)

(U) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Boston Announces Operation Summer Heat Results

(U) The Boston Division of the FBI made 404 arrests over the past three months as part of Operation Summer Heat, the FBI's nationwide effort to crush violent crime. Locally, the FBI Boston, which includes Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, made 404

arrests under the Summer Heat initiative, 129 seizures of deadly drugs, recovered 38 weapons, and identified/located 27 children. The FBI's Southern Maine Gang Task Force and its partners made 35 arrests, executed 37 searches, and seized multiple firearms and narcotics, including 4.5 kilos of cocaine, 713 grams of fentanyl, 478 grams of methamphetamine, and 60 grams of crack cocaine. For additional information, please visit [FBI Boston Announces Operation Summer Heat Results — FBI](#)

Sources:

¹ Drug Enforcement Administration. (2025, May 13). *2025 National Drug Threat Assessment*. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/2025NationalDrugThreatAssessment.pdf>

² National Drug Early Warning System. (2025, October 24). *Special report: EMS encounters for nonfatal xylazine-related overdoses in the U.S., January 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025*. National Institute on Drug Abuse. https://ndews.org/wordpress/files/2025/10/10.24.25_NDEWS-2025-nonfatal-xylazine-related-overdoses.pdf

³ National Drug Early Warning System. (n.d.). *Novel surveillance*. <https://ndews.org/novel-surveillance/>

⁴ National Drug Early Warning System. (2025, October 24). *NDEWS Weekly Briefing Issue 254: This week's focus — xylazine*. <https://ndews.org/newsletter/ndews-weekly-briefing-issue-254-this-weeks-focus-xylazine/?frame=0>