



Youth Fentanyl Awareness Campaign Frequently Asked Questions

What is this campaign about?

In 2021, there were nearly 108,000 drug overdose deaths--the highest number recorded in a 12-month period and a staggering 52 percent increase over the last two years. This rise in overdose-related deaths is being fueled by the prevalence of synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, which were involved in an estimated 66% of overdose deaths during this time period.

Fentanyl is often made illegally. It's laced into other drugs, like heroin and cocaine, and used to make fake versions of prescription pills. Because of this, many individuals who encounter fentanyl have encountered it unknowingly.

To increase awareness of the dangers & prevalence of fentanyl, this new campaign, *Real Deal on Fentanyl*, was created to educate young people 13-24 and arm them with lifesaving information. The campaign also includes a separate and distinct forthcoming creative effort, targeted to parents of 13–24-year-olds, to help parents also understand the risks posed by fentanyl, and how they can talk to their children about this issue.

What is fentanyl?

- Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Two milligrams of fentanyl – that's about the size of a few grains of sand – can be a potentially lethal amount.
- Drugs may contain deadly levels of fentanyl, and you wouldn't be able to see it, taste it, or smell it. Additionally, there is no quality control for illicit drugs and counterfeit prescription pills – they don't come with an ingredients list.
- Because fentanyl is extremely cheap to produce, and because it is incredibly powerful, fentanyl is often being mixed with other drugs such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, MDMA, and used to create counterfeit prescription medication, causing a stark rise in overdoses. In the case of counterfeit prescription pills, these fake pills don't contain any legitimate medicine.
- In 2021, the DEA reported seizing more than 20 million fake prescription pills that were often laced with fentanyl – that's more than the past two years combined. And of the pills the DEA has seized and identified as containing fentanyl, 40% of those contain a potentially lethal amount. ([Source: DEA](#))
- Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, and while initially intended for use in medical settings for severe pain management, today fentanyl is often manufactured illegally in unregulated environments. This illegally manufactured fentanyl is what we are focused on in our work, as this is the fentanyl that is laced into illicit drugs and used to make counterfeit prescription pills.



Who is the target audience, and why?

- To address the overdose crisis, the Ad Council is taking a holistic approach, starting with a campaign to focus specifically on educating youth about the dangers of fentanyl. This campaign aims to reach young people ages 13 – 24, so that young people can be armed with lifesaving information about the dangers of fentanyl. A forthcoming separate and discrete campaign will be targeted to parents of young people aged 13 – 24, so parents and caregivers are prepared to establish an open and meaningful dialogue with their children on this issue.
- The overdose crisis has continued to grow in the United States, and it is hitting our teens and young adults especially hard:
 1. According to a recent study from JAMA (April 2022), fatal overdoses among adolescents have been increasing at an alarming rate: they nearly doubled from 492 in 2019 to 954 in 2020, an increase of 94%. There was an additional 20% rise in 2021 compared to the previous year, as 1,146 overdose deaths were recorded
 2. This rise in deaths wasn't attributed to greater numbers of teens using drugs – substance use in this age group actually went down during the pandemic – but to overdose deaths caused by fentanyl.
 3. The same JAMA study found that fentanyl-related deaths increased from 253 in 2019 to 680 the following year. And in 2021, 77% of all teen overdose deaths involved fentanyl.

What are the media components of the campaign?

The *Real Deal on Fentanyl* campaign is a multi-channel PSA campaign designed for the digital, social and linear platforms where young adults spend the bulk of their time. Media assets will include digital, social and linear video assets, along with digital banner assets and radio PSAs.

A separate but coordinated campaign that focuses on informing parents of the dangers of fentanyl will be launching this Fall and included additional assets to reach a parents & caregiver audience.

How do I get copies and access the public service announcements?

To access Ad Council PSAs, please click on the Find Assets link below. You will be brought to the Ad Council's website where you can create an account and download high resolution, broadcast quality files free of charge.

<https://www.adcouncil.org/find-assets>

What is the Ad Council?

The Ad Council has a long history of creating life-saving public service communications in times of national crisis, starting in the organization's earliest days during World War II to September 11th and natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy and, most recently, leading the industry's



response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its deep relationships with media outlets, the creative community, issue experts and government leaders make the organization uniquely poised to quickly distribute life-saving impactful information to millions of Americans.

The Ad Council is where creativity and causes converge. The non-profit organization brings together the most creative minds in advertising, media, technology and marketing to address many of the nation's most important causes. The Ad Council has created many of the most iconic campaigns in advertising history. Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. Smokey Bear. Love Has No Labels.

The Ad Council's innovative social good campaigns raise awareness, inspire action and save lives. To learn more, visit [AdCouncil.org](https://adcouncil.org), follow the Ad Council's communities on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and view the creative on [YouTube](#).

How will the campaign be evaluated?

Program evaluation is a critical component of every Ad Council campaign. In order to assess a campaign's effectiveness and impact, the Ad Council adheres to a rigorous framework of evaluation for each campaign. This framework establishes metrics early in the campaign process to ultimately measure each campaign's exposure, recognition, engagement and impact among identified target audiences.

Specific methodologies used to measure each of these evaluative components include: donated media support, press coverage, consumer response, consumer tracking studies and national trend studies, as well as digital and social metrics.

Who do I email with questions?

Please contact Monica Hunter, Campaign Director, The Ad Council, mhunter@adcouncil.org with questions.

For questions related to specific media requests, you may also contact the Ad Council media team [here](#).