

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Health Subcommittee Hearing: Combatting Existing and Emerging
Drug Threats
February 6th, 2025
Opening Statement

Thank you, Chairman Carter, for bringing us together for this important hearing, and I look forward to continuing to work together as this Subcommittee considers many critical issues this Congress.

Today, we will hear from a diverse panel about existing and emerging drug threats that are infiltrating our communities. Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us here today.

Unfortunately – most Americans have a family member, friend, or neighbor who has been impacted by illicit drugs. This could include anything from opioids, such as heroin, illicit fentanyl, fentanyl-related substances, to stimulants such as cocaine or methamphetamine.

And we're hearing more about the prevalence of xylazine and nitazenes in some communities as well.

We have all heard heart-breaking stories about the toll that illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances are having on our communities, and the rate at which Americans are dying from fentanyl poisoning is just staggering.

In 2023 alone, the DEA seized over 390 million lethal doses of illicit fentanyl in the United States – that's more than enough to kill every American.

We've learned that most of the illicit fentanyl trafficked into the United States is being produced by transnational criminal organizations in Mexico, from precursor chemicals sourced from China. It's then coming

across our southern border in mass quantities and brought into our communities.

This is why we must work together to finally get the HALT Fentanyl Act signed into law.

This bill, led by Rep. Griffith, will permanently place fentanyl-related substances into schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act and help give law enforcement the tools to stop these traffickers. I encourage all my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to vote for this vitally important legislation on the floor today.

On top of the increased prevalence of synthetic opioids – xylazine, or tranq, is continuing to emerge as a significant drug threat.

Tranq is a sedative typically used on large animals, with no known medical use in humans. In fact, individuals who inject street drugs containing xylazine can develop wounds severe enough to require amputation.

These individuals may also be at a higher risk of suffering from fatal drug poisonings because overdose reversal medications cannot reverse its effects.

There has been bipartisan interest in making xylazine a Schedule III controlled substance, which will help DEA crack down on criminals who traffic the substance, and I hope to continue the momentum this Congress.

We hear from families every day. Families who have lost a child... brother...or sister...and they don't want anyone else to experience their pain. We owe it to them to do what we can to prevent others from experiencing this loss.

We should be working together to punish those who make, import, and distribute these poisons to our children, and help those with substance use disorders find treatment and recovery.

I now yield 2 minutes to my colleague, Vice Chairman Dr. Dunn.