

Chairman Brett Guthrie Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Health
Policies to Protect Our Communities From Illicit Drug Threats
Thursday, March 26, 2026 – 2:00 PM

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you, Chairman Griffith. And thank you to all of the witnesses for being here.

Today, we will hear from a diverse panel about existing and emerging drug threats and discuss policies designed to help keep our communities safe.

These drug threats continue to evolve from opioids like oxycodone and heroin, to illicit fentanyl—to now—the prevalence of xylazine and nitazenes, as well as synthetic 7-OH, known as “gas station heroin.”

Bad actors are using illicit pill presses and fentanyl to make pills including punches and dyes imprinting logos onto those pills, making them look like legitimate prescription medication.

Just last week, DEA announced a significant seizure in my home state of Kentucky from this past January. The DEA seized approximately 17 kilograms of fentanyl, two industrial grade pill presses, and two kilo-brick presses. According to DEA, this seizure prevented almost 9 million potentially lethal doses of fentanyl from reaching our communities.¹

I’m proud of the work we’ve done in this Committee to crack down on the influx of illicit drugs and to uplift individuals and families struggling with substance use disorders—like getting the HALT Fentanyl Act and the SUPPORT

¹ Press Release, DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION, *DEA Delivers Major Blows to Drug Cartels, Advancing a Fentanyl Free America in 2026* (Mar. 19, 2026), <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2026/03/19/dea-delivers-major-blows-drug-cartels-advancing-fentanyl-free-america>.

Act signed into law—but there is still work to be done to ensure law enforcement can adequately detect and combat the proliferation and distribution of deadly substances. I'm thankful to my colleagues who are leading on these efforts.

We have bills like the Combatting Illicit Xylazine Act to permanently place xylazine into schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act while ensuring veterinarians, farmers, and ranchers can continue to administer the sedative to animals, and the STOP Nitazenes Act to permanently place the drug class of nitazenes into schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

Further, the END 7-OH Act would place synthetic 7-OH into schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, and we'll consider a range of bills aimed at cracking down on the illicit distribution of pill press machines.

We must work to advance policies that ensure those who make, import, and distribute these poisons in our communities are brought to justice on behalf of the families who have experienced so much pain already, and to help those with substance use disorders find treatment and recovery so we can save lives in the future.

I thank the witnesses for their participation and look forward to today's discussion.

I yield back.