ARIZONA HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT SYSTEM

MEMO

DATE: July 7, 2026

TO: Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) Providers

FROM: Kate Dobler, State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA)

SUBJECT: Emerging Drug Supply Alert: Reported Detection of Medetomidine in Arizona

Dear Opioid Treatment Program Providers,

AHCCCS is sharing an awareness notice regarding a potential emerging drug supply concern that may impact individuals receiving opioid use disorder treatment services.
AHCCCS has been informed of a report from an Arizona opioid treatment provider involving a patient who believed they had purchased fentanyl, but subsequent testing reportedly indicated the presence of **medetomidine**, a veterinary sedative that has been increasingly identified in the illicit drug supply in other parts of the United States. According to information shared with AHCCCS, this may represent one of the first reported detections in Arizona.

AHCCCS is working with partners to gather additional information and assess the extent of any emerging trend. While further validation is ongoing, we believe it is important for OTPs to be aware of this report and remain vigilant for individuals presenting with atypical sedation, altered mental status, or clinical symptoms that may not align with expected opioid effects.

Key considerations include:

- Be aware of the potential presence of medetomidine or other non-opioid adulterants in the illicit drug supply.
- Continue following established overdose response protocols while recognizing that some adulterants may contribute to clinical presentations that are not fully reversed by naloxone alone.

- Encourage staff to report unusual presentations, emerging trends, or suspected adulterant exposures through appropriate clinical, public health, and law enforcement channels.
- Consider reinforcing harm reduction education with patients, including the risks associated with counterfeit or adulterated substances.

AHCCCS is coordinating with state and federal partners to obtain additional information regarding prevalence, clinical implications, and recommended response strategies. Additional guidance will be shared as it becomes available.

If your program has identified similar cases or has information that may assist in statewide surveillance efforts, please contact Kate Dobler, SOTA, at catherine.dobler@azahcccs.gov.

Thank you for your continued partnership in protecting the health and safety of Arizonans.