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**Subject:** Heroin Ftanyl  
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I recently attended a news conference put on by the Bismarck Police Department discussing the recent rise in use and misuse as well as the effects of the Fentanyl/Heroin use. To understand why this is coming into our communities is to understand what the medical industry has done to contribute to this situation.

For years now myself and other consultants at our company A&D Consulting and other companies have been pointing out in the supervisor reasonable suspicion and employee drug and alcohol awareness training classes that prescription drug use is on the rise in many industries. As example, a post accident drug test for Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Motor carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) shows that over 28% of big rig crashes drivers test positive for prescription drugs as opposed to just over 11% for illicit drugs.

An employee of one of our clients living in Garrison North Dakota was injured on the job and given a prescription for pain pills. She arrived back in Garrison, and people she didn't even know began to approach her on the street, and some even to her door, indicating they heard she had been hurt. They all stated, "We don’t know what you were given for pain, but we will pay you $100.00 per tab".

How does this example tie to heroin, and now heroin/fentanyl, use? Eventually the scripts run out and it's easier to move to illicit drugs than to try to obtain prescription drugs. The fentanyl combined heroin is 50% to 100% more potent that just pure heroin so you need less. An issue is that no two manufacturings of the drug is the same so switching use from one supplier to another can result in overdose and death.
How serious are the communities and law enforcement taking this recent increase in Fentanyl/heroin? The North Dakota Board of Pharmacy in April presented to the North Dakota lawmakers, and beginning in July 1st of 2016, Naloxone Naxone, sold under brand names Narcan and Evzio, will be sold over the counter. Most private insurance groups and Medicare/Medicaid will cover the cost of this treatment for opioid overdose. Medical providers working with our returning injured troops are also seeing a increase in opioid addiction and the same pattern on the street with private sectors is seen in our vets.

It should be noted that safety directors or managers at companies either mandated to test such as the FMCSA, or a policy-oriented drug and alcohol testing program, should begin to increase training on the signs and symptoms of opioid use and abuse. Further items in that training should be the signs of symptoms of an individual after taking Narcan or Evzio. The drug gives a 20-minute window of withdrawal and "is not a long-term fix but a short window to seek medical help". Indicators of opioid withdrawal as result of Naxolone products include, sweating, agitation, vomiting, fever, sense of confusion and combativeness, nausea, diarrhea, stomach pain, body aches, tremors, shivering, fast or pounding heart beats, increased blood pressure, nervousness, weakness and an immediate desire to get high.

How potent is fentanyl? If you found an empty baggie that once contained fentanyl just the remaining residue lining the baggie could trigger a psychoactive reaction and potential overdose. It should be noted that no present five panel drug test including the federal lab test will indicate fentanyl in the opiate category. A specific test must be requested for fentanyl so your existing policy would need to reflect the fentanyl testing as an additional test. Please call us at 701-516-3850 with any other questions you may have.