



Governor Dan McKee's Overdose Task Force

March 8, 2023

Ana Novais, MA; Acting Secretary, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Richard Charest, MBA; Director, Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

Thomas Joyce, LCDP, CPRS; Task Force Community Co-Chair

Cathy Schultz, MPH; Task Force Director, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Welcome and Announcements

**RHODE
ISLAND**



Any individuals in need of a **new or an immediate bridge prescription** for:

- Buprenorphine
- Suboxone
- Subutex

Call the free **24/7 Prescription Buprenorphine Bridge** phone line at **401-606-5456** for an immediate prescription; or go to:

[**bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/licensed-treatment-providers**](https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/licensed-treatment-providers)

Help is available!



Recovery Friendly Workplace

March 2023 Designees



The **Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative** gives business owners and managers the resources and support they need to foster a supportive environment that encourages the success of their employees in recovery. Learn more at RecoveryFriendlyRI.com

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Problem Gambling Hotline 24/7

1-877-9GAMBLE

problemgamblingservices.com





RHODE ISLAND OVERDOSE RESPONSE STRATEGY

***NEW ENGLAND HIDTA
RHODE ISLAND STATE FUSION CENTER***

MARCH 2023

XYLAZINE HISTORY

- ▶ Discovered in 1962 by Farbenfabriken Bayer in Germany, but it was not approved by the FDA for human use. However, it was approved for veterinary use.
- ▶ First identified in Philadelphia as far back as 2006 when it was identified in overdose cases.
- ▶ In 2012, xylazine was identified as an emerging threat/new drug of abuse in Puerto Rico, where it was known as “Anastecia de Caballo” (horse anesthetic).
- ▶ Xylazine commonly goes by the street name “tranq” or “tranq dope.”

XYLAZINE HISTORY IN RHODE ISLAND

- ▶ Scheduled as a controlled substance in Rhode Island by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) in 2020.
- ▶ RIDOH's Forensic Drug Chemistry Lab had seen xylazine in samples submitted by law enforcement for several years prior.
- ▶ Currently, we see xylazine as a fentanyl adulterant in both powder and counterfeit pill forms.

XYLAZINE/CURRENT TRENDS

Year	Xylazine Determinations
2017	0
2018	0
2019	0
2020	6
2021	180
2022*	220

** 2022 data is incomplete. Data courtesy of the RIDOH Forensic Drug Chemistry Laboratory 2022*

Data Limitations

- ▶ Please note the following data limitations.
- ▶ Seized drug data consists of, but are not limited to, the following law enforcement cases:
 1. Overdose investigations, fatal and nonfatal.
 2. Narcotics arrest/seizures
 3. Found/voluntary turn-in narcotics
 4. Driving while under the influence (DWI) cases

XYLAZINE/CURRENT TRENDS

- ▶ 2022 test results have found xylazine in approximately **37% of all fentanyl** samples submitted by Rhode Island law enforcement.
- ▶ Xylazine was found in nearly **40% of counterfeit opioid pills** tested in 2022 by RIDOH's Forensic Drug Chemistry Lab.



Questions?

Bryan J. Volpe
Drug Intelligence Officer
New England HIDTA
401-278-1491
Bvolpe@nehidta.org

Thomas Chadronet
Public Health Analyst
CDC Foundation
401-278-1483
Tchadronet@nehidta.org



Toxicological and Ethnographic
Drug Surveillance Testing RI

testRI Xylazine Spotlight: Findings from the Local Rhode Island Drug Supply

Rachel Wightman, MD

Assistant Professor, Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown
University

Alexandra Collins, PhD

Assistant Professor, Brown University School of Public Health

Governor's Overdose Task Force | March 8, 2023



School of
Public Health
BROWN UNIVERSITY



BROWN | EM



people
place &
health
collective

testRI project overview



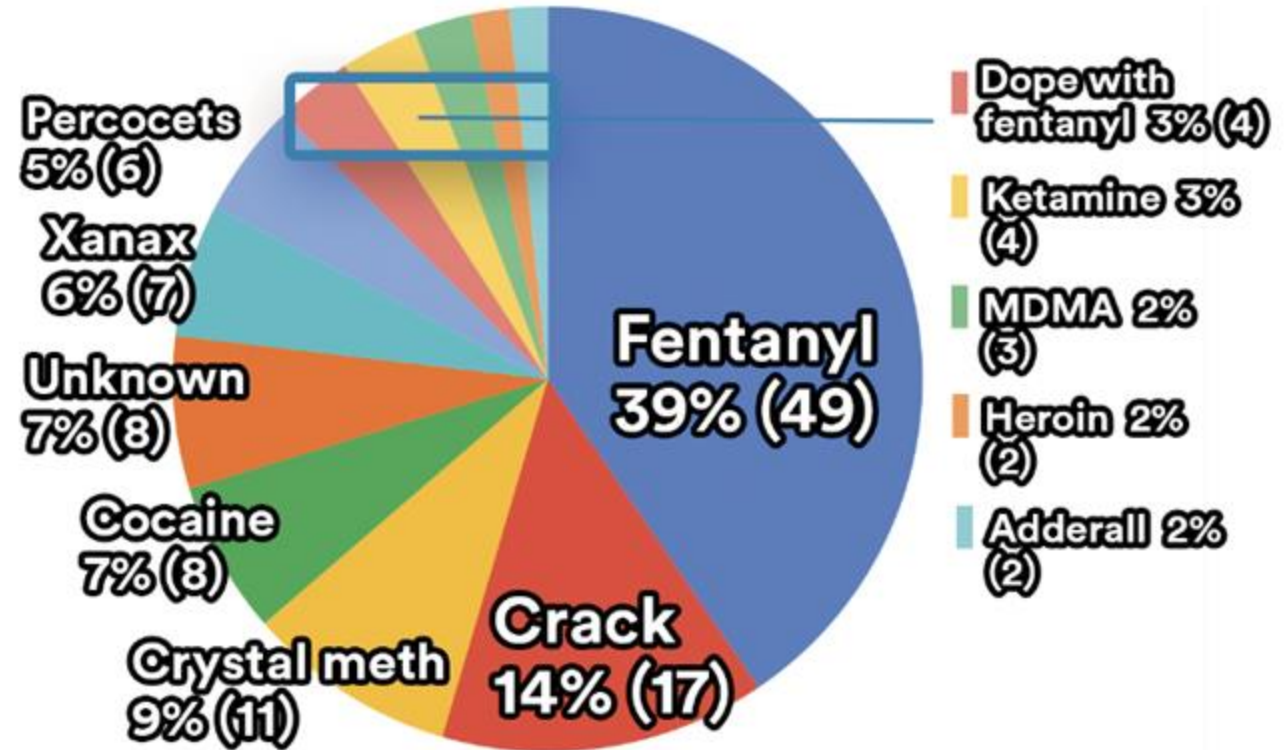
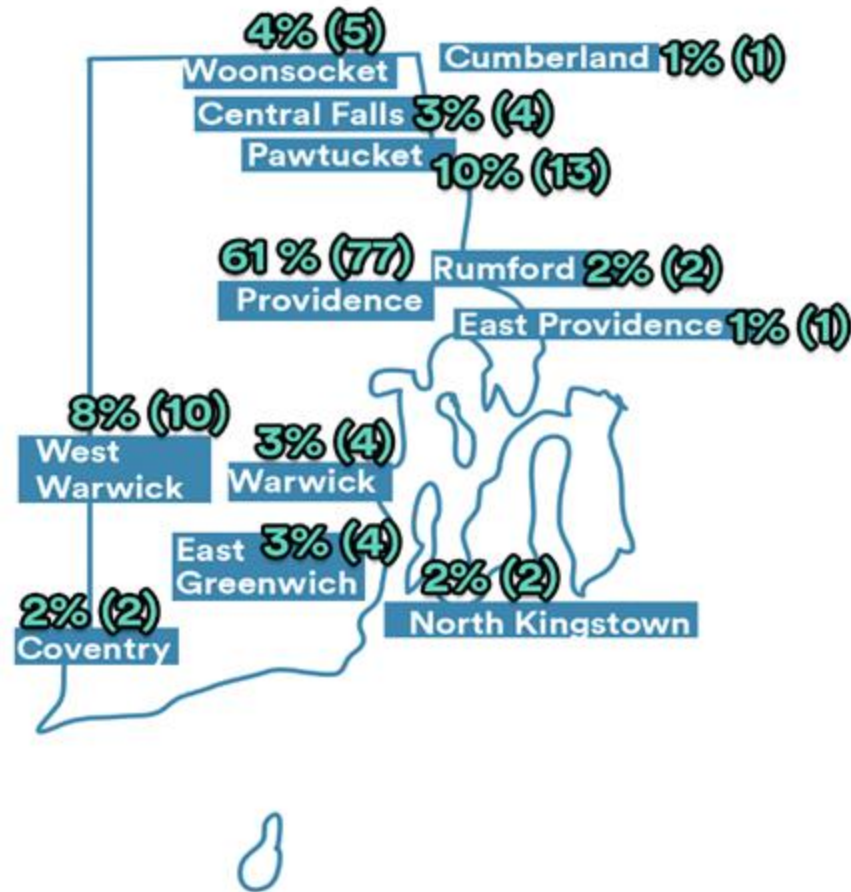
Two-year community-based research study

- Qualitative interviews with people who use drugs (n=50)
- Toxicology testing (n=200 samples) + feedback surveys
- Rapid dissemination of testing findings across audiences to inform harm reduction efforts

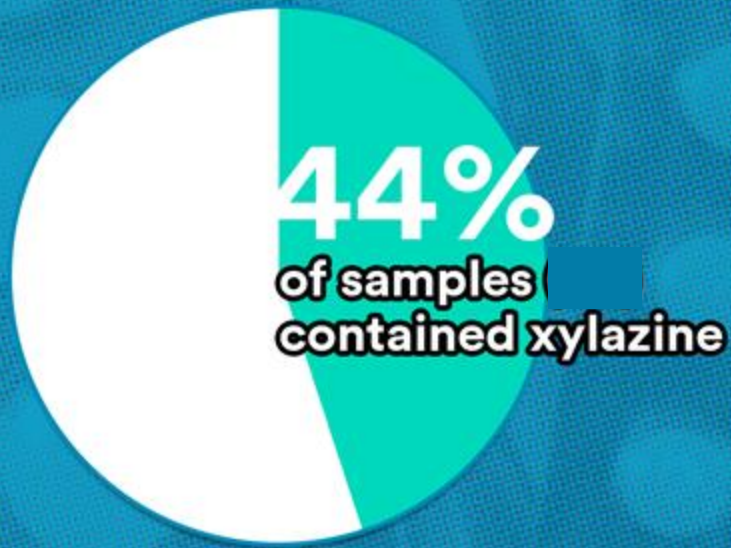
Samples are donated: (1) by study participants or (2) anonymously donated

- We collect location and substance the individual reported buying
- Samples include equipment (e.g., syringes, choy, cookers, pipes), refuse (e.g., baggies), and product
- All samples are tested on an LC-QTOF-MS at RIH Laboratory

125 samples have been tested from May 2022 - February 2023



among all samples,
close to half contained
xylazine



Out of 125 samples, 44% contained xylazine and 70% contained fentanyl

- ***Xylazine was always present with fentanyl and/or fentanyl analogs**

Xylazine and fentanyl were found most often in the following samples:

- **Fentanyl** (n=54): 65% xylazine, 100% fentanyl
- **Crystal meth** (n=12): 42% xylazine, 75% fentanyl
- **Crack** (n=16): 6% xylazine, 32% fentanyl

**visit testri.org to see all
sample results**

Update from the State Health Laboratories

Dr. Louis Marchetti

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Xylazine Update Overdose Prevention

Lex Morales – PWR

Michelle McKenzie – PONI

Xylazine

What it is :

- Xylazine is a long-acting medication used as a veterinary tranquilizer (not an opioid and not approved for human use).
- It has been found in the local drug supply in Rhode Island in combination with substances containing fentanyl.

How it affects the body:

- Xylazine can cause deep sedation that can last hours. When someone is deeply sedated and doesn't move for a long time, it can lead to injuries related to poor circulation. This includes skin, soft tissue, muscle, or nerve damage.
 - **Severe and persistent wounds.** Wounds may occur even if you do not inject, or in places where you do not inject.
- Xylazine, in combination with opioids, can also lead to problems breathing, and increase the chance of overdose.

Increased Overdose Risk Factor

Xylazine is a tranquilizer, which compounds the effects of an opioid and further suppresses breathing.



Drugs contaminated with xylazine may not appear any different.



Xylazine can increase the risk of overdose and cause drowsiness, unresponsiveness, slow heart rate, and decreased breathing.

How to respond

If someone is experiencing an overdose, use standard opioid overdose response:

- **Call 911**
- **Give naloxone every two minutes until breathing returns**
- **Administer CPR, if you know how, in combination with naloxone**

Focus on the breath!

Administer naloxone UNTIL breathing is restored.**

Once the person is breathing, place them in the recovery position and remain with them until help arrives.

****They may remain sedated after breathing is restored**

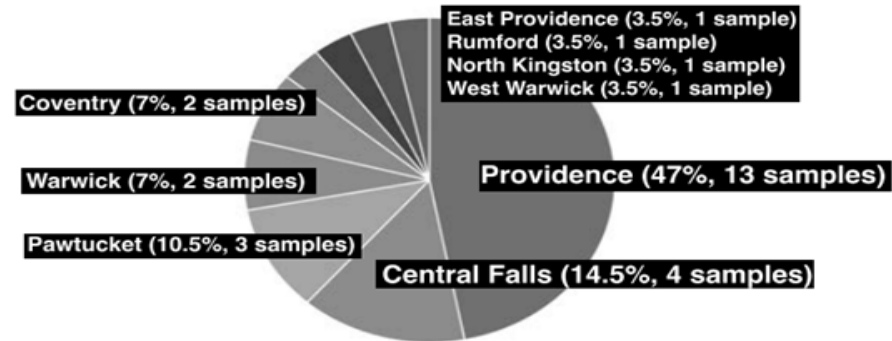
What xylazine looks like from the front lines

but is xylazine in Rhode Island?

Xylazine has been found in the local drug supplies in Rhode Island.

We tested 61 samples from May - August 2022 and xylazine was found in 28 of those samples.

Samples containing xylazine were from:



72%

of the samples (20 out of 28 samples) that contained xylazine were sold as **fentanyl**.

The other samples that contained xylazine were: dope with fentanyl (10.5%, 3 samples), crystal meth (7%, 2 samples), percocet (3.5%, 1 sample), crack (3.5%, 1 sample), and carfentanil (3.5%, 1 sample).

Curious about what else we've found in the supply? Scan the QR code on the back to check out our results from what we have tested so far!

- Prolonged sedation after responding to an overdose
- Wounds in place other than injection place
- Partnering to test drug samples to see what is in local supply
 - 28 out of 61 samples tested, xylazine was present
- Educating folks served on safer drug use practices, what to expect when xylazine is present and providing harm reduction services/referral to wound care.

Michelle McKenzie - mmckenzie@lifespan.org

Lex Morales - lmorales@weberrenew.org

Xylazine Resources

Updated Xylazine Information on Prevent Overdose RI

PreventOverdoseRI.org/xylazine



Xylazine About Learn More Prevent An Overdose See The Data Find Resources

Get Involved Languages

Learn About Xylazine

Xylazine is a powerful sedative recently found in the Rhode Island drug supply. Xylazine isn't an opioid but can still impact an overdose.

Xylazine (**pronounced zai-luh-zeen**) is a long-acting medication used as a veterinary tranquilizer. It is not approved for human use. It has been found in the local drug supply in Rhode Island in combination with fentanyl.

Need Supplies?

Find out more information about resources you can get to help stay safer with xylazine:

- Get Safer Drug Use Supplies
- Find a Wound Care Clinic
- Get Naloxone

New Xylazine Outreach Publications – Multiple Languages

Palm Cards

How to Stay Safer with Xylazine

Xylazine is a powerful veterinary sedative recently found in the Rhode Island drug supply. Xylazine isn't an opioid but can still impact an overdose.

Have naloxone and don't use alone

Drugs that have xylazine in them very often have fentanyl, too. Make sure you and your friends carry naloxone. **Make sure someone is around to administer naloxone if you overdose.**



Call 911

If you think that someone is overdosing, call 911 first and **administer naloxone** until breathing is restored. The Good Samaritan Law provides certain legal protection, whether you have drugs on you or not.



Support breathing

If the person is breathing again but is still sedated, they don't need more naloxone. **Put the person on their side supported by a bent knee.** This will help them breathe.



Treat your wounds and use new supplies

Xylazine can cause severe wounds and ulcers that can lead to an infection. Wounds may occur even if you do not inject or in places where you never injected. It's important to use new supplies and to get medical care for wounds.



For safer drug use supplies, resources, and more information, visit PreventOverdoseRI.org/xylazine



PREVENT OVERDOSE RI

Flyers

Four Ways to Stay Safer with Xylazine

Xylazine is a powerful veterinary sedative recently found in the Rhode Island drug supply. Here's how to stay safer:

Use near someone who can check on you

Make sure someone is around to administer naloxone if you overdose.



Have naloxone nearby

Drugs that have xylazine in them very often have fentanyl, too. Make sure you and your friends carry naloxone.



Call 911 first if there is an overdose

911 will instruct you on how to support the person's breathing. If the person is breathing again but still sedated, put them on their side supported by a bent knee. The Good Samaritan Law provides certain legal protection, whether you have drugs on you or not.



Use new supplies and get wounds treated

Xylazine can cause severe wounds that can lead to an infection. Always use new supplies and get care for wounds.



Get FREE safer drug use supplies and other resources:



Project Weber/RENEW
640 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02907
124 Broad Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860
Kennedy Plaza, Providence, RI 02903
Tel: 401-383-4888
Hours: Mon.-Wed.; Fri., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Thurs., 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.



AIDS Care Ocean State
557 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02907
Tel: 401-781-0665
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Tues. & Thurs. 6 p.m.-8 p.m.



Parent Support Network
535 Centerville Road, Suite 202, Warwick, RI 02886
Tel: 401-603-6069
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.



Community Care Alliance
245 Main St, 3rd Floor, Woonsocket, RI 02895
Tel: 401-235-6044
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For safer drug use supplies, resources, and more information, visit PreventOverdoseRI.org/xylazine



PREVENT OVERDOSE RI

**SCAN AND
ORDER**



PREVENT OVERDOSE RI

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Questions

Public Comment
