

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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MEMO

TO: FILE

FROM: Sharee Rusnak, Epidemiologist 3

THRU: Meg Harvey, Epidemiologist 4 *hLH*

CC: Carmen Chaparro, Acting Section Chief

Date: February 26, 2024

Re: Guidance to the Hartford Health Department During a Fentanyl Spill Incident at a Multi-Family Residence in Hartford, Connecticut

Background and Statement of Issues

On November 20, 2023, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) was asked to provide guidance to the Hartford Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) during a fentanyl spill incident in an apartment in a two-family building located at [REDACTED], Hartford, Connecticut. This Letter Health Consultation (LHC) documents the details of the fentanyl spill incident and the guidance that we provided to the HDHHS.

Providing technical assistance to local health departments about cleanup and re-occupancy of indoor spaces after spills or releases when there is potential exposure to chemicals or drug residues is a type of assistance that falls within the scope and purpose of the cooperative agreement program grant from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ASTDR). CT DPH has had an ATSDR cooperative agreement program for more than 30 years.

The CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Emergency Response Unit (ERU) notified the CT DPH Toxic Hazards Section on November 20, 2023 that a fentanyl spill incident occurred at [REDACTED] in Hartford. This building has no current tenants other than the person who was involved in



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fentanyl spill incident who lived on the third level of the upper apartment (which consists of the second and third level of the building). When the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officers arrived, the person threw some product (fentanyl) out of the third floor window and some of the product ended up on the floor (the last room on the right on the third floor). There was also likely some contamination on the walls. The DEA cleaned up the gross contamination outside and in the room on the third floor. The residual contamination was not cleaned up.

A 'Do Not Enter' tape for the entrance to the third floor was placed by the DEA on the second floor, but since the second floor couldn't be sealed from the third floor, the owner was told by the Hartford Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) that they could not enter the second floor either. The owner told the HDHHS that a contractor was currently renovating the second and third floor.

The HDHHS asked DPH Toxic Hazards Program to provide guidance regarding the recommended steps they should take before re-opening the upper apartment. CT DPH gave cleanup and post cleanup sampling and analysis guidance to the HDHHS. CT DPH's recommendations, which are largely based on the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA's) guidelines for addressing fentanyl spill incidents (CT DPH 2022 and EPA 2021), include hiring an outside vendor to perform cleanup and post cleanup sampling and analysis where the CT DEEP ERU, the DEA, and the cleanup contractor identified that fentanyl was present and where the fentanyl cleanup occurred. These recommendations were carried out by the HDHHS and the City of Hartford.

The owner was told verbally and via a letter on November 20, 2023 that she could not occupy the second and third levels (upper apartment) of the building until it was cleaned up with a Tier I Professional Clean Up Contractor and after cleanup, wipe samples had to be taken and analyzed for fentanyl. Further, she was advised that the second and third floor (upper apartment) could not be occupied until the post cleanup wipe samples did not detect fentanyl.

Since the owner complained to the city of Hartford that she could not afford to pay for the cleanup and post cleanup sampling and analysis that needed to be performed before the upper apartment could be occupied, the city of Hartford paid for the cleanup and post cleanup sampling and analysis.

A contractor hired by the city of Hartford performed a cleanup of the areas of the third floor of the upper apartment which were identified as likely to be contaminated with fentanyl by the DEA and CT DEEP ERU.

Environmental Contamination

One composite sample made up of 3 individual wipe samples was taken from 3 places in the room on the third floor of the apartment where the spill took place: the wall below the window where the fentanyl was thrown out of, the doorknob and the floor. The samples were taken to a lab and analyzed for the presence of fentanyl. The sample analysis results did not detect the presence of fentanyl.

Discussion

Because the composite wipe sample did not detect fentanyl, CT DPH recommended that the upper apartment of the building could be occupied again. This recommendation is consistent with the US EPA's guidelines for addressing fentanyl spill incidents (EPA 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

HDHHS followed all of CT DPH's recommended steps before re-opening the upper apartment. This ensured that there was no potential for the owner or future tenants to be exposed to fentanyl after the apartment was re-opened for renovation work and later when it was occupied by tenants. While the apartment was closed, HDHHS provided accurate and timely information to the owner so she would be informed about the situation and the actions being taken to clean and safely reopen the upper apartment.

After the wipe sampling, because fentanyl was not detected in the upper apartment, CT DPH recommended that no further action was necessary.

Works Cited

2022 CT DPH. Connecticut Department of Public Health. DRAFT: Steps to Take When Addressing a Fentanyl or Carfentanyl Event. March 18, 2022.

2021 EPA. Voluntary Guidelines for Methamphetamine and Fentanyl Laboratory Cleanup. United States Environmental Protection Agency. *Available at:* https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/meth_lab_guidelines.pdf. August 2021.

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