

Authorities suggest precautions for public if drugs are found

Jon Garcia 15 hrs ago

Marietta Police are warning residents of the possibility of highly dangerous opioid drug residue in public places, adding that those who encounter suspicious substances should take precautions so they are not exposed and potentially suffer bodily harm.

Authorities say that the opioid drug epidemic that began with the abuse of pain medications and progressed to highly addictive heroin has now moved on to even stronger drugs — heroin mixed with a much more potent drug called fentanyl and even carfentanil, believed to be the most potent illegal drug on the streets today.

Fentanyl alone is so potent that merely touching or inhaling tiny amounts, as small as a grain of salt, can cause a person to suffer an immediate drug overdose, according to Officer Chuck McPhilamy, spokesperson with Marietta Police.

Georgia Bureau of Investigation crime lab technicians earlier this month found a synthetic form of fentanyl, cyclopropyl fentanyl, in counterfeit pills related to a string of overdoses in central Georgia, according to Nelly Miles, a GBI spokesperson.

The pills also contained U-47700, a synthetic opioid 7.5 times stronger than morphine. Both substances, Miles added, can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin and are extremely toxic even in small quantities.

With fentanyl and other related drugs becoming more prevalent, Marietta Police are concerned that residue left behind in places later accessed by the general public — from hotel rooms, restrooms, vacant apartments or rental vehicles — may cause accidental exposures and potential overdoses.

While McPhilamy says there have been no known cases within the state of a person uninvolved in the drug culture becoming accidentally exposed to fentanyl and suffering an overdose, the public should remain on alert to the slight possibility of the presence of drug residue, even if places frequented by the general public may not often be frequented by drug users, dealers or addicts.

Anyone who sees items suggesting the presence of drugs, drug paraphernalia or a suspicious powdered substance should refrain from touching and handling the substance and keep others away from it as well, then call 911 so police and emergency personnel can investigate. Citizens should then follow instructions from emergency personnel to render the area safe.

The opioid crisis is the subject of an event Thursday night put on by the Davis Direction Foundation, a group dedicated to raising awareness about and fighting against addiction. The foundation will present "The Vicious Cycle: Why the Opioid Epidemic Continues to Thrive" from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Marietta Performing Arts Center, 1171 Whitlock Ave. in Marietta.

The event will feature Dr. Harold McLendon, medical director of the Davis Foundation; Cobb County District Attorney Vic Reynolds; and state Rep. Bert Reeves, R-Marietta.

For more information on the event, call 770-693-5982, email info@davisdirection.com or visit davisdirection.org.

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