

General Assembly



Topic A: “The impact of Fentanyl on American communities: A focus on overdose prevention and treatment accessibility in urban and rural areas.”

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**Mariana
Gascón**

MODERATOR:

**Regina
Hurtado**

CHAIR:

**Isabella
Aguilar**





Welcoming letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to this edition of Colegio Fontanar Model of the United Nations. We are very excited to have you at the General Assembly, thank you for choosing this committee.

In this committee we will debate about illicit substances, how they have impacted us, the transportation and other branches of these topics.

We are sure that each one of you is going to do a great job giving your opinions and ideas, we wish you all the best for this Model of the United Nations.

Sincerely,

Regina Hurtado and Isabella Aguilar

Moderator and Chair of General Assembly

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I. Committee Background

The UN General Assembly is the main policy-making organ of the United Nations. Comprising all 193 Member States, it provides a forum for international issues, with each Member State having an equal vote.

The General Assembly also makes key decisions for the UN including:

- Appointing the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the Security Council
- Electing the non-permanent members of the Security Council
- Approving the UN budget

The Assembly convenes for regular sessions annually from September to December and additionally as needed. It addresses specific topics through dedicated agenda items or sub-items, resulting in the adoption of resolutions.



II. Introduction to the Topic

Fentanyl is one of the most dangerous and widely consumed drugs in the world, with even higher usage rates in the United States. This drug induces feelings of relaxation, euphoria, and pain relief, among other effects. This is why many people turn to fentanyl in an attempt to feel better.

The U.S. is the country with the highest rate of fentanyl consumption, more than a million people have died as a result of this crisis. After the U.S., Canada and Mexico rank second and third in fentanyl consumption. These countries are actively working to address the issue, but their prevention efforts have not been highly successful, as people continue to use fentanyl believing it will improve their well-being. However, after experiencing an overdose, they often don't know what to do and end up facing even more severe physical and mental health issues.



II. Introduction to the Topic

The impact of fentanyl on American communities has reached a critical level, causing devastating consequences that extend beyond individual tragedies. The surge in overdose deaths involving fentanyl, which reached around 73,838 in 2022, highlights the severity of this public health crisis. Nearly 70% of all drug overdose deaths in the U.S. can be attributed to fentanyl. Its potency—up to 50 times stronger than heroin—has contributed to rising addiction rates further exacerbated by its presence in various other drugs, increasing the risk of overdose and complicating treatment efforts.

Healthcare systems are under immense strain, with emergency services overwhelmed by overdose cases and hospitals struggling to provide adequate addiction treatment.



II. Introduction to the Topic

Affected communities are facing social disintegration, economic burdens and limited access to treatment resources, particularly in rural areas.

Addressing this crisis requires expanding overdose prevention measures, improving treatment accessibility and promoting public awareness to combat stigma and encourage individuals to seek help. Without immediate and comprehensive action, the devastating consequences of fentanyl use will persist, leading to further loss of life and the destabilization of communities.



III. Evolution of the Topic

The impact of fentanyl on American communities has evolved from a medical concern to a widespread public health crisis. The opioid epidemic originated from the overprescription of legal pain medications in the 1990s, which led to addiction and subsequent illicit drug use. The emergence of fentanyl, a potent synthetic opioid, in the early 2000s further exacerbated the crisis due to its high potency and its presence in mixtures with other drugs. Fentanyl-related overdoses sharply increased in 2015, straining healthcare systems and prompting various stakeholders to implement prevention, treatment and harm reduction initiatives to combat the crisis and support affected populations.

Fentanyl's impact on U.S. communities underscores the urgent need for a holistic approach that includes prevention, treatment and community involvement in addressing drug abuse.

IV. Relevant Events

A. Panorama

Fentanyl is not fully prohibited in the United States and continues to affect the health of many individuals, particularly those struggling with mental health issues. These individuals often turn to fentanyl as a form of self-medication, leading to overdose, with most cases resulting in death. Encouraging people to stop using this substance could significantly help those in need, but one major challenge is that rural areas often lack the resources and support necessary to assist individuals before and after they use fentanyl.

The treatment provided to those who have ingested fentanyl or are in the process of quitting is crucial. This is when they need the most help and support to avoid relapse. However, not all individuals have access to this treatment, whether due to financial constraints, lack of nearby healthcare facilities or other barriers.



IV. Relevant Events

B. Points of view

U.S.A.: Operation Four Horsemen, launched in March 2023, was a complementary operation by the United States Border Patrol (USBP) aimed at intercepting fentanyl shipments between Ports of Entry (POEs) and at checkpoints near the border. As a result of these operations, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) seized nearly 10,000 pounds of fentanyl along with more than 10,000 pounds of other narcotics, including cocaine and methamphetamines.

Mexico: Mexico has taken several steps to address fentanyl trafficking and reduce overdose risks, although these efforts face significant challenges from organized crime and limited resources.

IV. Relevant Events

Mexican authorities have focused on tightening control over precursor chemicals, which are primarily imported from China and used by cartels such as the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation Cartels (CJNG) to manufacture fentanyl. These efforts include increased inspections at legal ports of entry and enhanced collaboration with U.S. authorities on precursor interdiction to curb the smuggling and distribution of fentanyl across borders.

China: China plays a key role in the fentanyl trade due to regulatory challenges and economic factors. Chinese companies legally produce precursor chemicals for industrial use, but these can be diverted for fentanyl production by Mexican cartels, who then smuggle the final product into the U.S. Despite efforts to regulate specific chemicals since 2019, new unregulated chemicals are frequently used, complicating enforcement.

IV. Relevant Events

Economic interests in the chemical sector also contribute to the problem, as these products are highly profitable, making it difficult to enforce comprehensive bans. In recent years, China has agreed to improve cooperation with the U.S. to reduce these exports, but significant hurdles remain in controlling the flow of all potential precursors.

V. UN and External Actions

The United Nations, spearheaded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has developed a comprehensive strategy to combat the global opioid crisis, with a particular focus on synthetic opioids like fentanyl. The UNODC's Opioid Strategy includes international coordination, enhanced law enforcement efforts and the promotion of prevention and treatment programs. These initiatives involve trend monitoring, capacity building, collaboration with organizations like the WHO and INTERPOL, toolkit development and a strong emphasis on public health.

External actors including individual countries and NGOs have also taken significant actions.



V. UN and External Actions

For example, Mexico has implemented anti-trafficking measures, coordinated law enforcement efforts, harm reduction strategies and formed international coalitions to address the complexities of the fentanyl crisis collectively.

VI. Conclusion

Fentanyl has shifted from a medical issue to a public health crisis in the United States, with a concerning rise in overdose deaths. The UN, through UNODC, has implemented global strategies to address the opioid crisis, including international cooperation, prevention, and treatment. National and international measures have been taken, such as dismantling trafficking networks and improving cooperation between law enforcement agencies. Collaboration between governments, international organizations and NGOs is crucial for developing effective solutions and supporting those struggling with addiction. Immediate and coordinated action is needed to save lives and mitigate the negative social and economic repercussions.



VI. Conclusion

Fentanyl is causing a public health crisis in the U.S. that requires international cooperation, effective policies and multi-stakeholder engagement. Education, treatment and naloxone distribution are critical to addressing this crisis.

VII. Committee Focus

- What problems are triggering fentanyl overdose?
- What challenges prevent people from accessing addiction treatment, and how could treatment be easier to get?
- How can the treatment accessibility of fentanyl be implemented all rural areas?
- Which community programs or delegations could help to prevent addiction and how?
- What incentives could encourage healthcare providers to work in areas heavily affected by fentanyl addiction?

VIII. Participation List

- Argentine Republic
- Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
- Canada
- Federative Republic of Brazil
- French Republic
- People's Republic of China
- Plurinational State of Bolivia
- Republic of Chile
- Republic of Colombia
- Republic of Costa Rica
- Republic of Ecuador
- Republic of El Salvador
- Republic of Guatemala
- Republic of Honduras
- Republic of Paraguay
- Republic of Peru
- Russian Federation
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United Mexican States
- United States of America

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