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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LWAM Sees 4,400 Percent Increase in Fentanyl Seizures, Warns Fentanyl is Number One Drug Threat to Fox Valley

OSHKOSH, Wis. – The Lake Winnebago Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group – Drug Unit (LWAM) saw a dramatic spike of 4,400 percent more fentanyl seized during 2022 compared to 2021 throughout LWAM’s area of responsibility including Outagamie, Winnebago, Fond du Lac and Calumet Counties. While dangerous drugs such as methamphetamine and heroin continue to threaten communities, fentanyl has rapidly become the number one drug threat to the Fox Valley area.

As a synthetic opioid originally designed to aid in pain management, fentanyl is a powerfully addictive opioid approximately 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Fentanyl can be lethal in very small doses. A dose of approximately 2mg can be fatal, which is the size of only a few grains of sand. Fentanyl can come in many different forms, including powdered, mixed with other drugs or as counterfeit prescription pills of varying shapes, sizes, and colors.

“Fentanyl is an extraordinarily dangerous drug that has caused a large number of overdose deaths,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “Thank you to the team at LWAM that’s working to combat this dangerous drug and reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs in the Fox Valley.”

“The law enforcement leaders that participate in LWAM believe that the rise of Fentanyl in our communities is a scourge on our citizens. Overdose deaths related to Fentanyl are skyrocketing and we must do all we can to change this trajectory,” said Oshkosh Police Chief Dean Smith. “We continue to support our communities by

providing personnel to LWAM to further the investigation of those who would deal drugs in our community."

"It is incumbent upon the Lake Winnebago Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group – Drug Unit to inform the public about this highly addictive and dangerous drug in hopes that raising awareness can assist in preventing harm to the community at large," said LWAM Special Agent in Charge Jeremiah Winscher. "It is LWAM's mission to investigate individuals, groups and organizations that illegally traffic this deadly drug into our communities and hold those offenders who chose to distribute fentanyl responsible for their criminal actions."

During the 2022 calendar year, LWAM seized approximately 6,300 grams of illicit controlled substances containing fentanyl. This amount of fentanyl marks approximately 4,400 percent more fentanyl seized than that of the 2021 calendar year. While this figure may be largely attributed to the [December 2022](#) seizure of approximately 12 pounds of counterfeit prescription pills containing fentanyl, the largest individual fentanyl seizure in LWAM history; even without that seizure, LWAM seized approximately 560 percent more fentanyl in 2022 than 2021.

Counterfeit prescription pills containing fentanyl are especially dangerous due to a lack of control measures used in their illicit manufacture. These illicitly manufactured pills can contain varying amounts of fentanyl with some pills containing a lethal dose and others not. This makes each dose a gamble. According to [Drug Enforcement Administration](#) testing, approximately 60 percent of seized counterfeit prescription pills contain a lethal dose of fentanyl.

LWAM is committed to preventing the flow of fentanyl into communities by means of effective investigations and teamwork. This can only be accomplished through collaboration from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies as well as state and federal prosecutors and the public.

LWAM is a multijurisdictional task force comprised of investigators from 15 participating law enforcement agencies within Winnebago, Outagamie, Fond du Lac and Calumet Counties. LWAM's mission is the investigation and enforcement of both state and federal drug trafficking laws with the goal of preventing the flow of illegal and dangerous drugs into the communities within these counties as well as holding offenders who chose to distribute dangerous drugs within these communities accountable for their criminal activities.