

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 30, 2023

Administrator Anne Milgram
Drug Enforcement Administration
8701 Morrisette Drive
Springfield, VA 22152

Dear Administrator Milgram,

I write to urge you to report on the manufacture, prevalence, and risk posed by the tranquilizer xylazine and immediately divert more resources to state and local law enforcement and more personnel on the ground to counter the horrific effects of this drug on the frontlines.

Between 2021 and 2022, 107,735 Americans died from drug poisonings—66% of those deaths involved synthetic opioids. I cannot overstate how dire this crisis has become, and it will only worsen as xylazine, used to cut fentanyl and heroin, becomes more prevalent. Xylazine is already responsible for 34% of overdose deaths in Philadelphia—with New York City not far behind at 19%. There is currently no antidote for a xylazine overdose, and those who do not overdose often develop severe wounds—including necrosis—at injection sites that often lead to amputation or other permanent health consequences. DEA Administrator Anne Milgram has called xylazine “the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced,” and state and local governments across the country are struggling to respond to and counter the impact of this drug in their communities.

Only 18 months ago, xylazine was reported in 36 states. Today, that number has risen to 48 states. While xylazine has legitimate uses in animal agriculture, DEA must investigate the growing illicit market for this drug—from manufacture to distribution. We must know more about where this drug originates, how much of the illicit supply of this drug is diverted from the legal supply, how xylazine is being diverted to and through the United States, and whether there are any analogues to the drug that could be of risk to Americans.

I also urge DEA to increase resources to state and local governments nationwide to provide them with the tools necessary to investigate and crack down on illegal drug networks. In 2022, 23% of fentanyl powder and 7% of fentanyl pills that were seized contained xylazine, and these numbers will only continue to rise. DEA must expand its Diversion Control Teams to more states to partner with High Intensity Drug Trafficking (HIDTA) teams already established and aid law enforcement in preventing, detecting, and investigating the diversion of fentanyl and xylazine from licit sources into illicit markets. DEA must also divert more funding to programs like the DEA State and Local Task Force Program and Operation Engage that have provided vital resources for state and local governments to track down and break up illicit drug trafficking networks. But public officials are struggling with the recent explosion of xylazine-laced opioids

in their states, and DEA must act accordingly to prevent this drug from making what is already the worst overdose crisis in history even more deadly.

I thank DEA for all that the Administration has already done to fight this crisis, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all as we continue to fight this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator