



***Drug Enforcement Administration***

Administrator Anne Milgram

www.dea.gov

@DEAHQ

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Contact: DEA Public Affairs

571-776-2508

***NEWS RELEASE***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DEA Operation Last Mile Tracks Down Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartel Associates  
Operating within the United States**

***Reveals That Social Media Platforms Play Significant Role in Cartels' Ability to Get Fentanyl  
and Methamphetamine into American Communities***

**WASHINGTON** – Today, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration announced the results of a year-long national operation, “Operation Last Mile,” targeting operatives, associates, and distributors affiliated with the Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels responsible for the last mile of fentanyl and methamphetamine distribution on our streets and on social media.

DEA’s top operational priority is to defeat the Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels—the two drug cartels based in Mexico that are responsible for the vast majority of the fentanyl and methamphetamine that is killing Americans. In Operation Last Mile, DEA tracked down distribution networks across the United States that are connected to the Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels. The Operation shows that the Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels use violent local street gangs and criminal groups and individuals across the United States to flood American communities with huge amounts of fentanyl and methamphetamine, which drives addiction and violence and kills Americans. It also shows that the Cartels, their members, and their associates use social media applications—like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat—and encrypted platforms—like WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Wire, and Wickr—to coordinate logistics and reach out to victims.

Operation Last Mile comprised 1,436 investigations conducted from May 1, 2022 through May 1, 2023, in collaboration with federal, state and local law enforcement partners, and resulted in 3,337 arrests and the seizure of nearly 44 million fentanyl pills, more than 6,500 pounds of fentanyl powder, more than 91,000 pounds of methamphetamine, 8,497 firearms, and more than \$100 million. The fentanyl powder and pill seizures equate to nearly 193 million deadly doses of fentanyl removed from communities across the United States, which have prevented countless potential drug poisoning deaths. Among these investigations, more than 1,100 cases involved social media applications and encrypted communications platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Wire, and Wickr.

“The Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels use multi-city distribution networks, violent local street gangs, and individual dealers across the United States to flood American communities with fentanyl and methamphetamine, drive addiction, fuel violence, and kill Americans,” said Administrator Milgram. “What is also alarming—American social media platforms are the means by which they do so. The Cartels use social media and encrypted platforms to run their operations and reach out to victims, and when their product kills Americans, they simply move on to try to victimize the millions of other Americans who are social media users.”

“As our communities continue to grapple with drug poisonings, the sales of illicit drugs, and the violence that so often accompanies these crimes, our local, state, and federal partnerships have never been more important,” said Eddie Garcia, President of the Major Cities Chiefs Association. “Working together and towards the same goal has paid dividends when it comes to impacting criminal networks that continue to seek death and destruction on our streets.”

“Arrests focusing on key components of the drug cartel’s illegal drug distribution chain will help all of us in our efforts to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations who are flooding our nation with deadly drugs and violence,” said Sheriff Mike Milstead, Chair of the Drug Enforcement Committee, National Sheriffs’ Association. “The strategy of DEA to coordinate these investigations with state/local/tribal law enforcement agencies has once again proven effective and we applaud the results of this nationwide investigation.”

“The Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) commends the Drug Enforcement Administration for their efforts during *Operation Last Mile*. The MCSA is proud to stand alongside our partners at the DEA to end this crisis and protect our citizens from the cartels,” said Sheriff Dennis Lemma, MCSA President. “The results of this yearlong investigation are unprecedented and demonstrate the importance of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies working together.”

Operation Last Mile is an example of DEA’s network-based approach to take out Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartel members and associates in the United States and across the globe, stop fentanyl, and save American lives. In April 2023, the DEA and our federal partners [announced](#) the indictment of 28 members and associates of the Sinaloa Cartel operating in Mexico, China, and Central America, including the leaders of the Cartel known as the “Chapitos.”

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