

Combating Illicit Xylazine Act (H.R. 1839/S. 993)



AVMA SUPPORTS

Combat the emerging threat posed by illicit xylazine while preserving veterinary access to this important animal sedative

KEY POINTS:

- Xylazine is an important prescription veterinary sedative used to facilitate the safe handling and treatment of many species and is particularly important for use in cattle, horses, zoo/wildlife, and research species.
- Sedation of fractious and large animals with xylazine is critical to keeping people and animals safe. This is an essential drug for safe cattle handling, given there is no practical alternative for sedation in cattle.
- Illicit xylazine (“tranq”) is increasingly being found mixed with illicit narcotic drugs, such as fentanyl, and has been identified as an emerging public health threat.
- Now the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and lawmakers are looking to address this issue with enforcement tools to target illicit xylazine traffickers.

What will this bill do?

The legislation would engage and equip the DEA with tools to combat illicit xylazine trafficking while maintaining veterinarians’ access and ability to legitimately use this critical animal sedative under its current prescription status.

Specifically:

- Anyone found importing, manufacturing, or possessing xylazine meant for distribution and use in people would be subject to harsher penalties under the Controlled Substances Act.
- Xylazine for use in non-human species would continue to be overseen by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a prescription animal drug.
- Any diversion of xylazine from the veterinary supply chain for unlawful use in humans would be subject to harsher penalties under the Controlled Substance Act.
- Manufacturers and distributors of legitimate xylazine would report sales to the DEA through an existing tracking system (ARCOS) that identifies unusual activity or changes in ordering patterns.
- The DEA would submit a report to Congress detailing the prevalence and impacts of illicit xylazine use in the U.S.

What is the problem?

- Illicit xylazine has now been found in all 50 states mixed with fentanyl and other narcotics. This potent drug combination poses grave health and safety risks to human users.
- Because xylazine is not an opioid, its effects can’t be reversed with opioid-reversing drugs such as naloxone, complicating the efforts of first responders and emergency physicians.
- **Limiting veterinary access to this critical drug will jeopardize animal welfare and human safety.**
- This bill will maintain the availability of the product for legitimate veterinary use, minimize supply chain disruption, and preserves its important use for the restraint of livestock and other species.

Why is AVMA supportive?

The AVMA fully supports this legislation because it strikes the right balance of protecting our communities from illicit xylazine while preserving veterinary access to this critically important animal drug.

Status of the bill:

- On March 28, 2023, H.R. 1839/S. 993 was introduced into Congress by Reps. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.) and August Pfluger (R-Texas); and Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa).

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