# EMERGING THREAT REPORT Annual 2022

Drug Enforcement Administration
Special Testing and Research Laboratory

The Special Testing and Research Laboratory's Emerging Trends Program compiled the data for this report through a query of archived seizure and analysis information from drug evidence analyzed by the Drug Enforcement Administration's laboratory system. This data is representative of drug evidence seized and analyzed in the date ranges annotated. This is not a comprehensive list of all new psychoactive substances and is not representative of all evidence analyzed by DEA. This data is an annual snapshot of the new psychoactive substance market in the United States.

The term new psychoactive substance (NPS) describes a recently emerged drug that may pose a public health threat. This includes synthetic cannabinoids, substituted cathinones, phenethylamines, opioids, tryptamines, benzodiazepines, and a variety of other chemical classes. Due to the increase in seizures over the last several years, fentanyl is also included in this report.

An identification is made when authenticated reference material is available for comparison. When reference material is not available, the drug evidence is identified as "substance unconfirmed" or "inconclusive." A single unit of drug evidence may have multiple sub-units. For the purposes of this document, each unit of drug evidence counts as one identification regardless of the number of sub-units. Some seized drug evidence contains more than one active ingredient; therefore, more than one identification can be made for a single unit.

## SUMMARY

**MDMB-4en-PINACA was the most reported synthetic cannabinoid and N,N-dimethylpentylone was the most reported cathinone in 2022. The most prevalent NPS benzodiazepine in CY2022 was clonazolam. Fentanyl was the most commonly reported opioid.**

**Two classes of NPS saw an increase in identifications: opioids (68%) and benzodiazepines (15%).**

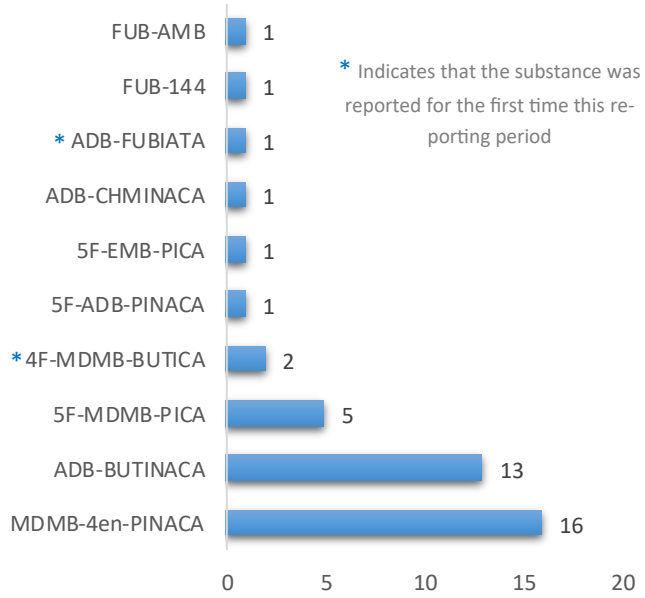
**Two classes of NPS saw a decrease in identifications: synthetic cannabinoids (70%) and cathinones (13%).**

**There were 15 substances reported for the first time in CY2022, meaning they had not been encountered for at least the last five years. This equates to one new substance approximately every month. *It should be noted that as backlogged samples are analyzed, the date of the first encounter may change.***

**The number of unconfirmed substances reported in CY2022 is nearly doubled over CY 2021.**

## SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

**THERE WERE 42 SYNTHETIC CANNABINOID IDENTIFICATIONS IN CY2022. THIS IS REPRESENTES A 70% DECREASE FROM CY 2021. MDMB-4EN-PINACA AND ADB-BUTINACA WERE THE MOST COMMONLY REPORTED SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS ACCOUNTING FOR APPROXIMATELY 69% OF THE IDENTIFICATIONS.**




## HALLUCINOGENS

**THERE WERE 1 IDENTIFICATION EACH OF 25C-NBOMe DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD. NO NOVEL HALLUCINOGENS WERE REPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CY 2022.**

## OTHER

**The "other" category includes substances that could not be confirmed, psychoactive plants, PCP related substances, benzofurans, hallucinogens, tryptamines, and amphetamines.**

**THERE WERE 83 INSTANCES OF INCONCLUSIVE REPORTS DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD REPRESENTING AN APPROXIMATELY 73% INCREASE OVER CY 2021. ADDITIONALLY, THERE WERE 5 IDENTIFICATIONS OF MITRAGYNINE AND O-DESMETHYL-CIS-TRAMADOL. 2F-DESCHLOROKETAMINE WAS IDENTIFIED 3 TIMES. 5-MeO-DBT WAS IDENTIFIED 2 TIMES. ADDITIONALLY, 2-OXO-PCE, 3-FLUOROPHENMETRAZINE, AND 4-AcO-DMT WERE REPORTED 1 TIME EACH. NONE OF THESE SUBSTANCES WERE REPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CY 2022.**

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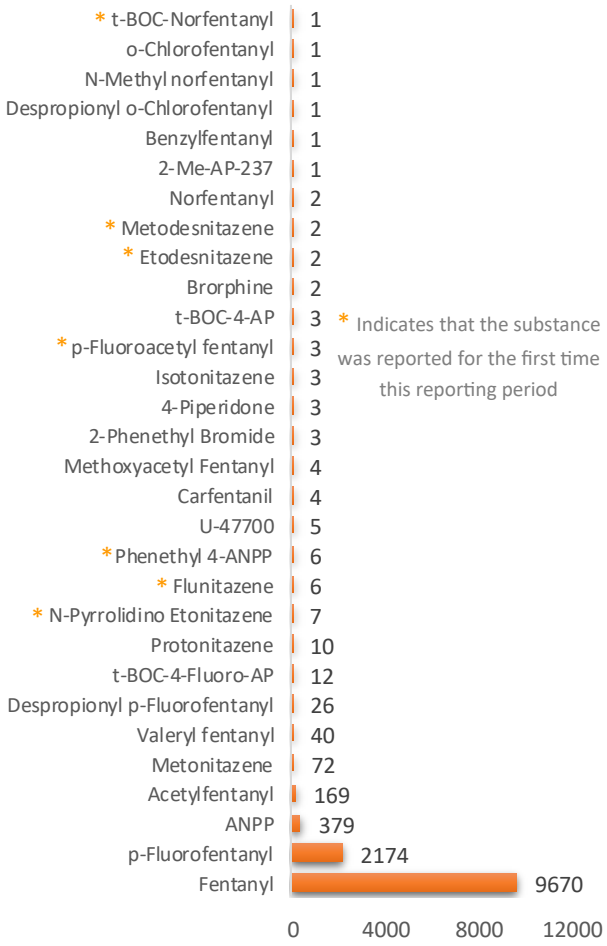
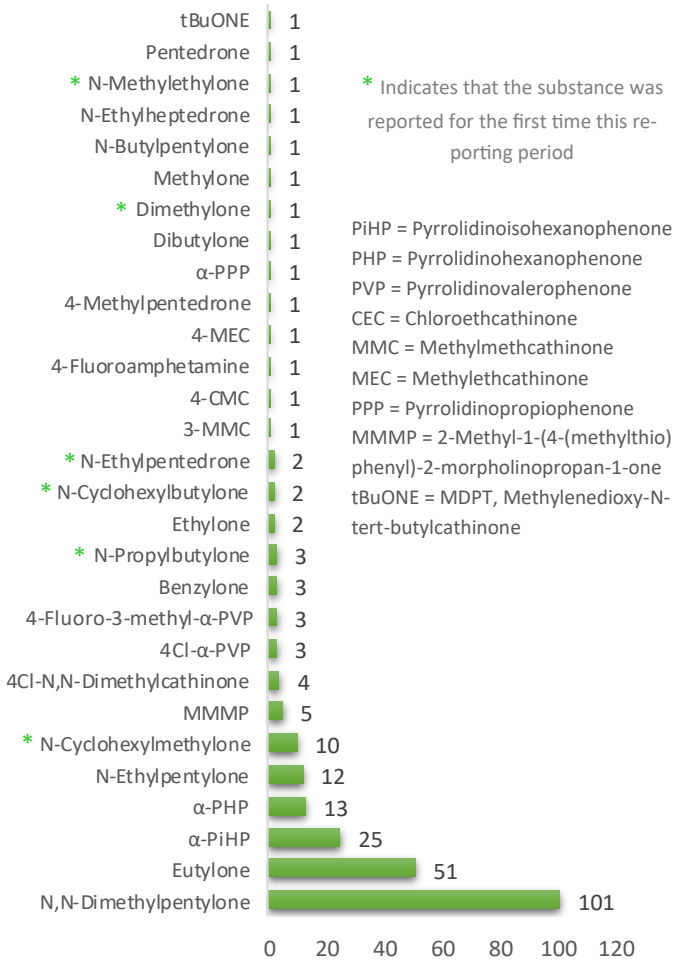
## OPIOIDS/ANALGESICS

THERE WERE **12,613** IDENTIFICATIONS OF FENTANYL, FENTANYL-RELATED COMPOUNDS AND OTHER NEW SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS. THIS REPRESENTS AN APPROXIMATELY **68%** INCREASE IN IDENTIFICATIONS FROM 2021. FENTANYL ACCOUNTED FOR APPROXIMATELY **77%** OF THE IDENTIFICATIONS. THE NEXT MOST PROMINENT SUBSTANCE, p-FLUOROFENTANYL, ACCOUNTED FOR APPROXIMATELY **17%** OF THE IDENTIFICATIONS.



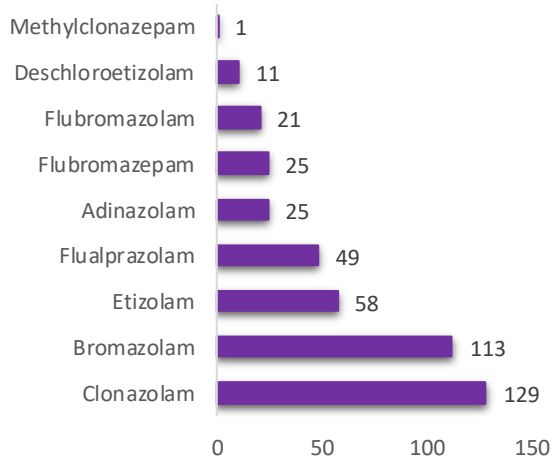

## CATHINONES

THERE WERE **253** CATHINONE IDENTIFICATIONS THIS REPORTING PERIOD. THIS REPRESENTES AN APPROXIMATELY **13%** DECREASE FROM CY2021. N,N-DIMETHYLPENTYLONE WAS THE MOST REPORTED CATHINONE, ACCOUNTING FOR APPROXIMATELY **40%** OF THE IDENTIFICATIONS.




## BENZODIAZEPINES

THERE WERE **375** IDENTIFICATIONS OF DESIGNER BENZODIAZEPINES DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD. THIS REPRESENTS AN APPROXIMATELY **15%** INCREASE FROM CY2021. CLONAZOLAM AND BROMAZOLAM WERE THE MOST REPORTED DESIGNER BENZODIAZEPINES ACCOUNTING FOR APPROXIMATELY **56%** OF THE IDENTIFICATIONS.




This completes the 2022 series of reports. Stay tuned for the Mid-Year 2023 Emerging Threat Report!

To be added to our distribution list, please contact us at the email address below.

Questions about this data are welcome and may be directed to the DEA Emerging Trends Program at 703-668-3300 or DEA.Emerging.Trends@dea.gov.