

# Grandmother becomes an advocate after losing granddaughter to fentanyl overdose

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GREENSBORO, N.C. — Debbie Peeden is a grandmother, mother and now activist.

## What You Need To Know

Debbie Peeden's granddaughter Ashley died from fentanyl in 2021

A report from the DEA shows that 6 out of 10 fentanyl-laced prescription pills contain a lethal dose of the drug

In 2021, according to the CDC, almost 108,000 Americans died from drug poisoning

Peeden said her granddaughter Ashley was hanging out with a friend in 2021 when she died.

“So turns out the cocaine that she thought she had was mainly fentanyl, and she had enough fentanyl all in her system from the toxicology report to have killed several people,” Peeden said.

This is becoming common with young adults. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, overdose deaths involving psychostimulants with abuse potential rose from 547 in 1999 to 23,837 in 2020 and continued to increase to 32,537 deaths in 2021.

Peeden says she will never be the same since the loss of Ashley. She and her husband had custody of her when she was just 12 months old and raised her.

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This is something she wants to change. Now that Ashley is gone she spends her time advocating for those who are no longer here and those who need help.

“Myself and so many other parents across the country are trying to bring awareness to the fentanyl epidemic and the fentanyl poisoning, so that you don't have to go through what

we are going through,” she said.

Recently, Rockingham County Sheriff Sam Page wrote a letter to President Biden urging him to do something about the issue.

“We the United States of America MUST hold the Mexican government accountable for the deaths that are occurring in our country. Everyone that dies in the United States due to fentanyl poisoning is someone's family member, a human being that's someone cares about and yes, many with addiction issues,” Page said in his letter.

Peeden is a part of Forgotten Victims of Fentanyl and Fentanyl Victims Network of North Carolina. These groups hope to educate those around them.

“We're trying to save their child's life. That's what our purpose is, is to bring that awareness,” Peeden said.