



U.S. SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL

WASHINGTON

Cantwell's Actions to Combat the Fentanyl Crisis

For the past six months, Sen. Cantwell has been traveling across the State of Washington convening roundtable discussions with people on the front lines of the fentanyl crisis. At each stop, Sen. Cantwell has heard from local leaders, first responders, health care providers, and folks with lived experience of addiction. To ensure participants can speak candidly and comfortably, some of these roundtables have been closed to press; others were open to reporters.

Sen. Cantwell has visited the following communities to discuss the fentanyl epidemic:

May 23, 2023: Sen. Cantwell held a closed-door roundtable to discuss fentanyl in [Pierce County](#).

June 5, 2023: Sen. Cantwell convened a closed-door fentanyl roundtable in [Everett](#). The discussion included Snohomish County Executive Director David Somers, who lost his brother to a fentanyl overdose earlier in the year. Sen. Cantwell held a media availability immediately after the discussion. [VIDEO](#)

July 17, 2023: Sen. Cantwell hosted an open-door fentanyl roundtable in [Tri-Cities](#). [AUDIO](#)

July 24, 2023: Sen. Cantwell convened an open-door fentanyl roundtable in [downtown Seattle](#). [PHOTOS](#)

July 31, 2023: Sen. Cantwell held an open-door fentanyl roundtable in [Spokane](#). [VIDEO](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

August 14, 2023: Sen. Cantwell hosted an open-door fentanyl roundtable in [Vancouver, WA](#). [VIDEO](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

August 17, 2023: Sen. Cantwell convened an open-door fentanyl roundtable in [Port Angeles](#). [VIDEO OF SEN. CANTWELL](#) | [VIDEO OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

August 23, 2023: Sen. Cantwell delivered an address at the inaugural [National Tribal Opioid Summit](#)-- a gathering of approximately 900 tribal leaders, health care workers, and first responders from across the country -- hosted by the Tulalip Tribe. [AUDIO](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

August 24, 2023: Sen. Cantwell held an open-door fentanyl roundtable in [Walla Walla](#). [VIDEO](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

August 25, 2023: Sen. Cantwell hosted an open-door fentanyl roundtable in [Yakima](#). [VIDEO](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

Legislative Actions: In May, Sen. Cantwell, chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, led a committee markup of S. 1280, [the TRANQ Research Act](#), to help combat the rise in illicit use of xylazine (also known as tranq). It directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology to take steps to enhance understanding of xylazine or tranq and other novel synthetic drugs, develop new tests for detection, and establish partnerships with front-line entities that are often the first points of contact with new street drugs. Sen. Cantwell is a cosponsor of that bipartisan bill, and also cosponsored similar bipartisan language to amend a bill that subsequently passed the Senate by unanimous consent in June.

In July, the Senate passed the [FEND Off Fentanyl Act](#) as part of the National Defense Authorization Act. The bill, which Sen. Cantwell cosponsored, would enhance current law so U.S. government agencies can more effectively disrupt illicit opioid supply chains and penalize those facilitating the trafficking of fentanyl. It also declares international trafficking of fentanyl, and the precursors used to make it a national emergency.

In October, Sen. Cantwell [sent a letter](#) to the leaders of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs requesting that the committee hold an oversight hearing on how to address the fentanyl crisis in Indian Country. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held the hearing on [November 8th, 2023](#), which included Lummi Tribe Chairman Anthony Hillaire. The Chairman testified on how the crisis has affected his community and emphasized the need for more federal resources. On December 6th, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held a second hearing on the fentanyl crisis in Indian Country with testimony from several federal officials, including Vanessa Waldref, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington, and Glen Melville, Deputy Bureau Director at the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Justice Services and member of the Makah Tribe.

In November, Sen. Cantwell [held a briefing on the fentanyl crisis](#) with her colleagues on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Briefers included officials from the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the Department of Commerce. The Senator also [released a statement](#) on the Biden Administration's announcement of China's agreement to help stop fentanyl chemical precursors from reaching the U.S.

Federal Funding to Address the Crisis in WA: In August, the Senator announced nearly [\\$10.5 million in funding](#) for Washington communities and Tribes, including the Yakama Nation and the Seattle Indian Health Board, to combat the fentanyl crisis and improve mental health care services.

In September, Sen. Cantwell announced [\\$625,000 in funding](#) to prevent youth substance abuse in the state and over [\\$2 million](#) for addiction treatment and emergency overdose response programs in three rural western Washington communities. Another series of grants totaling nearly [\\$4 million](#) was announced in late September, expanding Certified Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) in four Washington communities. CCBHCs provide a myriad of mental health and substance use treatments, specifically for low-income patients.

In November, Sen. Cantwell announced over [\\$5.9 million](#) in federal grants through the Department of Justice for Western Washington Tribes, counties, and cities to help improve local responses to the fentanyl

crisis. The grants will support programs that increase access to inpatient and outpatient treatment services, continuing education of emergency responders, and mental health services.