



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ★ DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION
DIVERSION CONTROL DIVISION

Diversion News: September 2024

DEA Operation Targets Pharmacy Burglaries and the Illegal Sale of Addictive Prescription Medications

On Aug. 29, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Arkansas announced the results of Operation Low Crawl – a 21-month investigation into a Houston-based drug trafficking organization (DTO) responsible for hundreds of pharmacy burglaries across the country.



DEA has seen an increase in burglaries at independent pharmacies nationwide. Nearly 900 burglaries involving the theft of controlled substances were reported to DEA in 2023. Stolen prescription medications adversely impact these small businesses while also putting patients and the community at risk.



The culmination of the investigation led to the arrest of 24 members of the DTO in July in Houston, bringing the total number of people facing charges connected to this drug ring to 42. The organization has been linked to more than 200 pharmacy burglaries across 31 states.

"This Houston-based network targeted rural pharmacies, stealing powerful drugs like Oxycodone, Xanax, and Adderall to flood the streets," said Administrator Anne Milgram. "These criminals even crawled on floors to dodge security, but they couldn't escape us. We dismantled their entire operation—street dealers, burglars, and all. In the fight against the opioid epidemic, the DEA is relentless in shutting down those who profit from fueling addiction."

Oxycodone, hydrocodone, alprazolam, and promethazine with codeine cough syrup were among the most common controlled substances stolen and transported to Houston to be sold illegally.

[Read the press release](#) and [watch the press conference](#)

A newly released safety video alerts the public of this crime. Reporting pharmacy burglaries helps detect and prevent stolen controlled substances from being sold on the streets and keeps the community healthy and safe. View the video [here](#).

Safety Alert Video Aims to Keep Pharmacies Safe, Educate Communities

A new campaign aims to prevent pharmacy burglaries. Independent, non-chain pharmacies often fall victim to pharmacy burglaries.

Criminals steal controlled substances and sell them on the streets, impacting both patient care and public safety.

A safety alert video walks pharmacists through steps they may consider to prevent theft. Watch the video [here](#).



In addition to the video PSA, a comprehensive set of resources for pharmacists is available [here](#).

DEA Chemical Working Group Conference to Bring Together nearly 150 Federal and International Partners



For the fourth year, DEA will host the Chemical Working Group conference from September 9-13, 2024, with attendees from federal and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies to include members of the Five Eyes, and representatives of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) via the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

The conference will focus on current and future trends in the diversion of precursor chemicals and manufacturing equipment used to make illegal drugs.

Attendees will be briefed on the political and legal landscapes around the globe and discussing how these landscapes influence the flow of controlled and non-controlled chemicals as well as the machinery used to produce illicit tablets and capsules.

California Diversion Investigators Reach nearly 1,100 Veterinarian Professionals



In July, San Diego and San Francisco Diversion staff met with veterinarians, vet techs, and office managers at the California Veterinary Medical Association's Pacific Veterinary Conference in San Francisco.

They answered important questions on record keeping, drug destruction, and other important issues.

More than 100,000 veterinarians are registered with the DEA nationwide. DEA-registered veterinarians can legally prescribe, dispense, and administer controlled substances, ensuring that these potent medications are used appropriately and safely in animal care.



Help DEA Make Every Day Take Back Day

A graphic for "Every Day is Take Back Day". It features a white drop box with the words "DROP HERE" and an arrow pointing to the slot. To the left of the drop box, there is text: "Every Day is Take Back Day", "Dispose of unneeded medication", "17,000 locations nationwide", and three bullet points: "Clean them out.", "Take them back.", and "All year long." At the bottom left, there is a logo for "DEA NATIONAL TAKEBACK".

There are already close to 17,000 pharmacies and hospitals helping to clean out medicine cabinets throughout the year. In addition, many police departments provide year-round drop boxes.

Visit <https://www.dea.gov/everyday-takeback-day> and learn what you can do to stop drug misuse before it starts.

DEA has registered a record number of authorized collectors – pharmacies and medical facilities – to collect unused and unwanted prescription drugs year-round.

DEA also hosts a bi-annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day to turn in unused, unwanted medications. Stay tuned for information on the fall Take Back Day.



DEA's Diversion Control Division strives to prevent, detect, and investigate the diversion of controlled pharmaceuticals and listed chemicals from legitimate sources. When the safety and health of the American people is in jeopardy, DEA takes action against those who violate the law.

USAO-Eastern District of Arkansas Announces Investigation Into Largest Pharmacy Ring in DEA History

Aug. 29, 2024

Devon Physician Agrees to Pay \$8,000 to Resolve Controlled Substances Act Violations

Aug. 20, 2024

Five Defendants, Including Two Doctors, Charged in Connection with Actor Matthew Perry's Fatal Drug Overdose Last Year

Aug. 15, 2024



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