



Program Description

Of all the major drugs of abuse, only marijuana is available as a natural, harvested product. All of the others whether illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, or legitimately produced pharmaceuticals, must be produced or manufactured. Many problems associated with drug abuse are the result of legitimately-manufactured controlled substances being diverted from their lawful purpose into the illicit drug traffic.

Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Office of Diversion Control is responsible for two distinct problems: the diversion of controlled pharmaceuticals and the diversion of controlled chemicals.

Diversion of Controlled Pharmaceuticals

Many of the narcotics, depressants and stimulants manufactured for legitimate medical use are subject to abuse, and have therefore been brought under legal control. The goal of controls is to ensure that these "controlled substances" are readily available for medical use, while preventing their distribution for illicit sale and abuse.

Under federal law, all businesses which manufacture or distribute controlled drugs, all health professionals entitled to dispense, administer or prescribe them, and all pharmacies entitled to fill prescriptions must register with the DEA. Registrants must comply with a series of regulatory requirements relating to drug security, records accountability, and adherence to standards.

The DEA is obligated under international treaties to monitor the movement of licit controlled substances across United States borders, and for issuing import and export permits for that movement. The DEA also devises ways to deal with problems of international drug diversion.

Diversion cases involve, but are not limited to, physicians who sell prescriptions to drug dealers or abusers; pharmacists who falsify records and subsequently sell the drugs; employees who steal from inventory; executives who falsify orders to cover illicit sales; prescription forgers, and individuals who commit armed robbery of pharmacies and drug distributors. **At present, the largest problem results from the criminal activity of physicians and pharmacy personnel.**