National Prescription Drug Threat Assessment 2009

National Drug Intelligence Center
Drug Enforcement Administration
Overview

- Greatest Drug Threat Data
- Diversion of CPDs
- Combating Diversion
- Abuse
  - Deaths
  - Demographics
LEA Reporting
Pharmaceutical Diversion as the Greatest Drug Threat

Percentage of Law Enforcement Agencies
Reporting Pharmaceuticals as the Greatest Drug Threat
For Year 2008 and 2009

- Pacific: 1.9% - 7.2%
- West Central: 5.0% - 7.3%
- Southwest: 5.4% - 3.2%
- Great Lakes: 9.4% - 12.7%
- Mid-Atlantic: 10.9% - 12.3%
- Southeast: 9.1% - 9.6%
- Florida / Caribbean: 10.1% - 17.9%

New England: 14.5% - 13.9%
New York / New Jersey: 7.0% - 8.0%

United States: 8.1% - 9.2%

October, 2009   Source: National Drug Threat Survey
Diversion

- NSDUH 2008: approximately 6.2 million people took a CPD other than as prescribed or nonmedically, which drives diversion.
  - Down from 6.9 million in 2007
- Diversion methods vary by drug Schedule
  - Small quantities of Schedule II CPDs are diverted through doctor shopping, theft, forgery, and sharing between family and friends.
  - Large quantities of Schedule III and IV CPDs are diverted through rogue online pharmacies in addition to the above methods.
Rogue Internet Pharmacies

• The number of rogue Internet pharmacies is impossible to determine.
  – Established and taken down quickly to avoid law enforcement
  – Most survey data indicate a low threat
• The Ryan Haight Online Consumer Protection Act of 2008 mandates face to face physical evaluations of patients by a physician
• Legitimate online pharmacies must register with DEA and indicate they are registered on their website.
Lost in Transit/Theft

- Millions of dosage units of CPDs are stolen or lost in transit annually.
  - Some of the CPDs lost in transit are recovered but are not reported.
  - The amount of CPDs stolen fluctuates.
  - The amount of lost or stolen CPDs that actually enter the black market is unknown.
- The threshold for reporting significant loss or theft is dependent on the business size and type.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armed robberies</td>
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<td>Milliliters</td>
<td>18,292</td>
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<td>Quantities</td>
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<td>Customer theft</td>
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<td>Employee pilferage</td>
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<td>Lost in Transit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milliliters</td>
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<td>Quantities</td>
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<td>Night break-ins</td>
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<td>Milliliters</td>
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<td>406,308</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantities</td>
<td>7,646,336</td>
<td>3,602,619</td>
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October, 2009  Source: DEA Drug Theft and Loss
Diversion and Crime

• Diversion and abuse of CPDs has been increasingly associated with violent and property crimes.
  - Abusers revert to crime when they can no longer afford the drugs.
  - Retail theft, daytime break ins, mail and identity theft, and some murders have been associated with CPD abuse.
Diversion and Crime

Percentage of Law Enforcement Agencies Reporting an Association between Diverted Pharmaceuticals and Crime, 2005–2009

Street gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs have increased their involvement in CPD distribution over the past 5 years.

- Street gang involvement increased overall in every region of the county.
- Outlaw motorcycle gang involvement increased overall throughout the country with the exception of the West Central Region.
Street Gang Involvement in Pharmaceutical Distribution

Percentage of Law Enforcement Agencies Reporting Street Gang Involvement in Pharmaceutical Distribution by Region 2005 through 2009

OMG Involvement in Pharmaceutical Distribution

Percentage of Law Enforcement Agencies Reporting OMG Involvement in Pharmaceutical Distribution by Region 2005 through 2009

Combating Diversion: DEA Initiatives

- **Internet Initiative**
  - DEA works with the traditional commercial businesses that facilitate online transactions
  - Payment providers prevent rogue pharmacies from accepting their payment systems

- **Distributor Initiative**
  - Holds wholesale CPD distributors accountable in reporting suspicious purchases
  - Distributors have to know their customers’ purchasing habits
Abuse: 2008 Demographics

- Most prevalent among 18 to 25 year olds (5.9%)
- Nonmedical use of CPDs among individuals 12 and older—including teens--has remained stable at about 2.9%
  - Most law enforcement and treatment providers report that abuse among teens is increasing.
- One third of first time drug users start with a CPD
  - Of that third, 22.5% initiate with pain relievers
  - 3.2% with tranquilizers
  - 3.0% with stimulants
  - 0.8% with sedatives

October, 2009
Abuse: Deaths

- CPD-related deaths increased 98% from 5,547 in 2002 to 11,001 in 2006.
  - Some of these deaths were likely due to clandestinely produced fentanyl-laced heroin.
- CPD-related deaths outpaced deaths from cocaine and heroin each year from 2002 through 2006.
- Most deaths involve numerous prescription and/or illicit drugs and alcohol.
Abuse: Treatment and Hospital Visits

- Prescription opioid treatment admissions increased 71 percent from 52,840 in 2003 to 90,516 in 2007.
  - Anecdotal reporting in at least one state indicates that there may become a shortage in available treatment.

- Emergency department visits involving pain relievers increased 39 percent from 144,644 in 2004 to 201,280 in 2006.

- ED visits involving benzodiazepines increased 36 percent from 143,546 in 2004 to 195,625 in 2006.
Abuse

• Some prescription opioid abusers use heroin or switch to heroin.
  – Heroin is most often much less expensive than diverted prescription opioids.
  – Some street dealers, particularly members of gangs, have added prescription opioids to their retail supplies.
• Young prescription opioid abusers are more likely to try heroin or switch to heroin than older abusers.
• Most drug abusers seek treatment after 12 years of addiction.
  – Future demand may outpace available treatment
Contact Information

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The *2009 National Prescription Drug Threat Assessment* can be accessed using the following web address:
