



U.S. Department of Justice ★ Drug Enforcement Administration

Diversion Control Division

Diversion Control Division News (February 2026)

Operation Meltdown Shuts Down Hundreds of Illegal Online Pharmacies

On February 4, 2026, DEA announced the seizure of more than 200 website domains tied to an India-based transnational criminal organization working within the United States and allegedly responsible for at least six fatal and four non-fatal overdoses.

DEA arrested four individuals, issued five Immediate Suspension Orders, as well as one Order to Show Cause, both of which are administrative actions taken against DEA registrants to protect the public from dangers to public health or safety. The U.S. government shut down more than 200 online pharmacies accused of filling hundreds of thousands of orders of diverted pharmaceuticals and counterfeit pills without valid prescriptions. Read [more](#).



“This case demonstrates how foreign-based traffickers exploit our healthcare system, hide behind the internet, and use people inside the United States to move dangerous drugs under the guise of legitimate commerce,” said DEA Administrator Terrance Cole. “Illegal online pharmacies put poison in American communities. They sell counterfeit and unapproved pills and do not care who gets hurt or who dies. Actions like this save lives. They protect the American people. If you run these sites, supply them, move the money, ship the product, or help them operate, we will find you, we will dismantle your operations, and we will hold you fully accountable under U.S. law.”

DEA Action Equips Emergency Medical Professionals to Save Lives and Reduce Serious Injury

Paramedics are often the first medical professionals a patient encounters during a medical emergency. Emergency personnel responded to 60 million calls in 2024.



Emergency medical professionals (EMS) evaluate and manage patients with acute traumatic conditions before they arrive at the hospital. Medical intervention at the emergency site and transport to the hospital can vary depending on the severity or type of injury and may require administering controlled substances. A new final rule allows these timely actions to life-saving medications.

What does this mean for EMS and patients?



DEA published the [final rule](#) under *The Registering Medical Services Agencies Under Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medication Act of 2017* on February 5, 2026.

This allows a DEA-registered EMS agency to obtain a single registration for each state where they operate, rather than a separate registration for each location within that state. It also permits a hospital-based emergency medical services agency to use the hospital registration to administer controlled substances without requiring a separate registration.

New Web Page Dedicated to Strengthening Partnerships, Providing Critical Information to Patients

DEA recently launched a new pharmacy news and resource web page as part of the agency's ongoing commitment to support pharmacists, medical practitioners, and patients nationwide. This site reflects the critical role pharmacists play in protecting public health and ensuring the safe and lawful distribution of controlled substances.



By centralizing timely information, regulatory updates, and diversion prevention resources, DEA aims to make information more accessible, transparent, and useful in day-to-day practice. This effort represents another step in strengthening collaboration and ensuring DEA's partners have the tools needed to serve our communities.

[Read the latest](#) on identifying prescription fraud, how to best protect yourself, and the latest pharmacy enforcement news.

Pink Cocaine Hitting American Communities



The drug landscape has changed. Drug use is more dangerous than ever before with the advent of fentanyl and the deceptive tactics used by drug organizations to drive dependency, which can eventually lead to addiction.

Several states are warning of pink cocaine – a powdered mixture of substances, which is dyed pink, may have a sweet smell, and typically produces mind-altering, hallucinogenic effects.

DEA laboratory testing has identified pink powders containing ketamine, MDMA, methamphetamine, cocaine, fentanyl, and xylazine.

Effects of pink cocaine can vary greatly as many seizures contain mixtures of a variety of dangerous drugs, but much like MDMA or ecstasy, pink cocaine is a mind-altering psychedelic drug. Ingesting an unknown substance or drug cocktail is dangerous and can be deadly.

Since 2020, DEA has seized a total of 960 pink powders, 4 exhibits contained 2C-B and 956 exhibits of “other” substances. To put that into perspective, within that same time, DEA has seized 180 million fentanyl pills.

Learn more about [pink cocaine](#).



Getting Rid of Expired Medications Has Never Been Easier



DEA and its federal law enforcement partners proudly collect unwanted, unneeded medications nationwide bi-annually. Yet you do not need to wait until the next DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

The agency launched the “Every Day is Take Back Day” campaign to remind communities of the nearly 16,500 year-round collection sites. Law enforcement and hospitals also have drop-off locations. More comfortable turning in expired medications at an event? Mark your calendars for the next Take Back Day on April 25, 2026.

Medical Professionals Learn about Hospital Initiatives

DEA recently hosted a webinar about Hospital Initiatives focused on personnel in hospitals and clinical settings. Medical practitioners in a hospital or clinic setting were offered the opportunity to review hospital/clinic inspections procedures, recordkeeping requirements, and diversion awareness. [Read more](#) about the virtual training.



DEA's Diversion Control Program offers training to DEA-registered medical professionals, chemical companies, drug manufacturers and others who handle controlled substances. Keep an eye out for future Virtual Diversion Awareness Training webinars.

Upcoming Webinars:

March 2026 – Three Day Rule

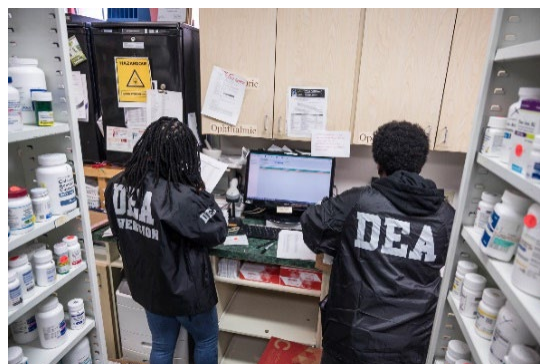
April 2026 – Quota series

Dates pending – Emergency Medical Professionals (EMS) final rule, Regulatory Drafting, Veterinarians Regulations, and Stimulants

Diversion Control Division Enforcement

The Diversion Control Division's enforcement efforts focus on protecting public health by identifying and addressing behaviors that place patients and communities at risk, while preserving access to legitimate medical treatment and commerce.

Data analysis, prescribing and distribution trends, and risk indicators associated with diversion, misuse, and patient harm inform enforcement priorities. The division emphasizes a targeted, risk-based approach, directing resources toward patterns of activity that reflect systemic compliance failures or elevated diversion risk, rather than isolated or inadvertent errors.



Through a combination of regulatory oversight, investigative action, and industry engagement, the Diversion Control Division works to promote accountability, transparency, and adherence to professional standards across the controlled substance supply chain.

What registrants should expect:

DEA will continue to prioritize enforcement actions that address significant public health risks, emerging drug threats, and repeat or egregious violations, while encouraging proactive compliance efforts and early corrective action.

These cases underscore DEA's focus on patient safety, professional accountability, and early identification of diversion risk.

Cheshire Nurse Admits Illegally Distributing Controlled Substances

Feb. 3, 2026

Former Anesthesiology Resident Who Worked at Seattle Children's, UW Medicine, and Harborview Medical Center, Sentenced for Stealing and Using Narcotic Pain Medicine While on Duty

Feb. 2, 2026

Pensacola Pharmacist and Conspirator Charged with Illegal Drug Diversion Conspiracy

Jan. 28, 2025

El Paso Doctor Enters \$200,000 Settlement Following State and Federal Fraud Allegations

Jan. 22, 2026

Portland Veterinarian Sentenced for Diverting Controlled Substances for Personal Use

Jan. 20, 2026

Upcoming News

Check out the DEA Diversion Control March Newsletter to get the latest on fentanyl enforcement, partnerships, and Spanish-language resources.



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News Updates

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