



U.S. Department of Justice ★ Drug Enforcement Administration

## Diversion Control Division

### Diversion Control Division News (January 2026)

## Assistant Administrator Cheri Oz Joins DEA's Diversion Control Division



Cheri Oz was appointed as the Assistant Administrator of the Diversion Control Division in November 2025. In this role, she serves as the principal advisor to the DEA Administrator on all matters pertaining to the regulation and coordination of programs associated with safeguarding the controlled prescription drug and listed chemical supply chain.

Her responsibilities include major pharmaceutical and chemical diversion investigations; drafting and promulgating regulations; establishing drug production quotas; and conducting liaison and outreach with industry, intergovernmental, and law enforcement partners.

As a 23-year veteran of DEA, her contributions as a Special Agent span several enforcement roles across multiple Divisions including Los Angeles, Miami, and Seattle. She led a Tactical Diversion Squad where she supervised investigations targeting the people responsible for moving billions of legitimate pharmaceutical pills onto the streets, contributing to America's opioid crisis.

## DEA Extends Telemedicine Flexibilities to Ensure Continued Access to Care

In partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, DEA issued a *Fourth Temporary Extension of the COVID-19 Telemedicine Flexibilities for the Prescription of Controlled Medications*, extending the current telemedicine flexibilities through December 31, 2026.

This temporary extension permits DEA-registered practitioners to remotely prescribe schedule II-V controlled medications via audio-video telemedicine encounters without having ever conducted an in-person medical evaluation. This includes schedule III-V narcotic-controlled



medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration for maintenance and withdrawal management treatment of opioid use disorder.

Two new final rules related to Telehealth also went into effect on December 31, 2025. These rules address telehealth options for [opioid use disorder](#) and [veterans' treatments](#).

Read more about the [extension](#) and its interplay with the final rules.

---

## Spokane Physician Prescribed Controlled Substances Without Legitimate Medical Purpose

Dr. Duncan Lahtinen, a licensed physician in Spokane, Washington, is paying \$120,000 in penalties to resolve allegations that he wrote prescriptions for controlled substances that lacked legitimate medical purposes or were outside the usual course of his professional practice.

Between 2017 and 2025, the physician allegedly prescribed more than 1,400 prescriptions for controlled substances to thirteen identified patients, many of which were issued in some combination of opioids, benzodiazepines, sedatives, and carisoprodol.

These combinations of controlled substances are dangerous and highly abused by those with substance use disorders. In issuing the prescriptions, the United States alleged the failed to address numerous red flags of substance abuse by his patients.



The DEA administrator issued an [immediate suspension order](#) and [order to show cause](#) against Latham. Read more about the [case](#) and the [settlement](#).

---

## Join the Fight to Make America Fentanyl Free



The DEA is intensifying its fight against the deadly threat of synthetic opioids with the launch of [Fentanyl Free America](#), a comprehensive enforcement initiative and public awareness campaign aimed at reducing both the supply and demand for fentanyl.

Protect communities. Prevent fentanyl overdose deaths. Support those impacted. Visit the Fentanyl Free America site for more information on the initiative. Free resources including posters,

radio advertising, billboards, and social media resources are available at [www.dea.gov/fentanylfree](http://www.dea.gov/fentanylfree).

---

## DEA Publishes Drug Production Quota for 2026



On Jan. 5, 2026, the DEA published [2026 aggregate drug production quotas](#) for schedule I and II controlled substances and the assessment of annual needs for the list I chemicals ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, and phenylpropanolamine as required by the Controlled Substances Act.

The proposed quotas represent the national domestic production quantities for these controlled substances and chemicals. Read the [final order](#).

---

## Make Every Day Take Back Day

Help prevent drug misuse before it starts and drop off unused prescription medications at one of the nearly 16,500 pharmacies, hospitals, and businesses, in addition to many police departments, that offer safe medication disposal year-round. For information on permanent drop boxes, please visit DEA's [Every Day is Take Back Day](#) page.



## Spring Drug Take Back Day Announced

DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back will be held **Saturday, April 25, 2026**. The bi-annual event provides the public with the opportunity to rid their medicine cabinets of unused and unwanted medications to prevent drug misuse before it starts.

DEA's biannual National Prescription Drug Take Back Days remove expired medications from American communities. Since the inception of the program, DEA and its partners have removed closer to 20.4 million pounds of unneeded prescription medication from homes across the country.

---

# Diversion Control Division Enforcement

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.

**Laredo Pharmacist Pays Six Figures to Settle Controlled Substance Act Violations**  
January 13, 2026

**Spokane Physician Pays \$120,000 to Resolve Allegations He Prescribed Controlled Substances Without Legitimate Medical Purpose**

December 11, 2025



## Upcoming News

Check out the February Newsletter to catch the latest on pink cocaine, fentanyl enforcement, and dangerous drug scheduling. Missed an issue? See the DEA Diversion Control Division [website](#).

**Follow @DEA on Twitter**

LOOK FOR #DEADIVERSION

Want to keep up with the latest drug diversion news? [Sign up](#) for Twitter/X alerts and look for us on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.

## News Updates

Get the latest news updates. [Sign up](#) for email updates.