DRUG DIVERSION

TRENDS AND METHODS

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OPIOID EPIDEMIC

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Opioid-Related Overdose Death Rates (per 100,000 people)¹

- < 5.9
- 6.0 - 9.9
- 10 - 14.9
- >15

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
State Opioid-Related Overdose Death Rates and Opioid Prescribing Levels
OPIOID EPIDEMIC

2000-2016

630,000 people died from drug overdose

2017

More than 72,000 drug-related overdose deaths

197 deaths per day
Imagine if Each Day a Plane Fell From the Sky

197 deaths per day in the United States

72,000 deaths – 2017 - CDC
OPIOID EPIDEMIC

48.5 million Americans have used illicit drugs or misused Rx drugs.

Almost 218,000 Americans died from overdoses related to Rx opioids from 1999 to 2017.

Around 46 people die every day from overdoses involving prescription opioids.
NATIONAL OVERDOSE DEATHS
NUMBER OF DEATHS INVOLVING ALL
DRUGS

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC Wonder

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
on Drug Abuse
NATIONAL OVERDOSE DEATHS
NUMBER OF DEATHS INVOLVING OPIOIDS

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC Wonder
NATIONAL OVERDOSE DEATHS
NUMBER OF DEATHS INVOLVING HEROIN

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC Wonder
NATIONAL OVERDOSE DEATHS
NUMBER OF DEATHS INVOLVING
OTHER SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS (PREDOMINATELY FENTANYL)

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC Wonder
OPIOID EPIDEMIC

3 Waves of the Rise in Opioid Overdose Deaths

- Other Synthetic Opioids: e.g., Tramadol and Fentanyl, prescribed or illicitly manufactured
- Commonly Prescribed Opioids: Natural & Semi-Synthetic Opioids and Methadone
- Heroin

Deaths per 100,000 population

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Nationwide drug-related emergency department visit rates (per 100,000)
2004-2010

Source: SAMSHA, July 2, 2012

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
PHARMACEUTICALS

- DEA controls and regulates the production, transfer, sale, and dispensing of pharmaceuticals
- Each entity within this distribution chain must be registered with DEA
- The journey of a single pill from production to consumer can be traced
CLOSED SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTION

- Manufacturer
- Distributor
- Patient
- Physician & Retail Pharmacy

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
DIVERSION

• "Diversion" occurs when pharmaceuticals move outside of the closed system

• DEA is also a regulatory agency
DIVERSION

Manufacturer

Distributor

Physician & Retail Pharmacy

Patient

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
MISSION

The mission of the Diversion Control Division is to **prevent, detect, and investigate** the diversion of pharmaceutical controlled substances and listed chemicals from legitimate channels of distribution while ... ensuring an adequate and uninterrupted supply of controlled substances to meet legitimate medical, commercial, and scientific needs.
FOUR COMMON METHODS OF DIVERSION

- Internet
- Theft
- Patients
- Practitioners

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
INTERNET

- Originally aimed primarily at users of ‘life style’ drugs (Propecia, Viagra) wanting anonymity
- Now targeting individuals seeking controlled pharmaceuticals,
  - Oxycodone
  - Hydrocodone
  - Oxymorphone
  - Hydromorphone
  - Benzodiazepines
  - Steroids
INTERNET

- **Two main methods**
  - **Site connects to physician who provides prescription**
    - Pay site
    - Prescription filled at related pharmacy
  - **Purchase pharmaceuticals outright**
    - Usual foreign
    - Sometimes individuals
    - Darkweb

- **No valid doctor patient relationship**
INTERNET- PREVENTION

• April 2009 - Ryan Haight Act Implemented
  • Defined Internet Pharmacies
  • Registration requirements
  • Required at least one “face to face” medical evaluation prior to issuance of prescription for controlled substance

• Caused decline in Internet Pharmacies
THEFT

- Violence
  - Burglary
  - Robbery
- Federal offense if replacement value over $500

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
THEFT

• Employee theft
• "Skim" small amounts from consumers
• Alter paperwork to avoid detection
• Steal prescription pads
PATIENTS

• “Doctor Shopping”

• Forged Prescriptions
DOCTOR SHOPPING

- Patient visits different doctors within limited time frame to obtain prescriptions for same or similar medications
- Patient fills prescriptions at different pharmacies
- Key failure of the health care system
FORGED PRESCRIPTIONS

- **Patient alters valid prescription**
  - Drug type
  - Amount
    - Quantity
    - Number of refills
- **Patient steals prescription or manufactures prescription on computer**
FORGED PRESCRIPTIONS

Prescription altered the type of drug from Tylenol II to Tylenol IV

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
FORGED PRESCRIPTIONS

Prescription altered to change the quantity from 12 to 120
FORGED PRESCRIPTIONS

Prescription altered to change the number of refills from one to four

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
Final Defendant Sentenced in Operation Chasing Oxy

NORFOLK, Va. – A Norfolk man was sentenced today to 10 years in prison for his leadership role in a nine-member conspiracy to fraudulently obtain and sell approximately 9,000 Oxycodone pills in Hampton Roads.

According to court documents, from February to September 2017, Deonte Farrow, who was sentenced today to 10 years, and Quentia Fields led a conspiracy to fraudulently obtain Oxycodone pills from various pharmacies in the Hampton Roads area for the purpose of selling the pills on the streets for a profit. Farrow and Fields manufactured and drafted prescriptions for Oxycodone pills from their home...
PRACTITIONERS

Unscrupulous registrants provide medication

• Without a legitimate medical purpose
  ▪ Accept medical records without follow-up
  ▪ Perform cursory examination

• Usually for extra money
  ▪ No insurance or government subsidies
  ▪ Cash only

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
A prescription for a controlled substance to be effective must be issued for a
legitimate medical purpose by an individual practitioner acting in the usual course of
his professional practice.

21 CFR § 1306.04(A)
United States v Moore  423 US 122 (1975)
PHARMACISTS’ CORRESPONDING RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for the proper prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances is upon the prescribing practitioner, but a corresponding responsibility rests with the pharmacist who fills the prescription.

21 CFR § 1306.04(A)

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
REMEDIES

• Administrative- DEA unilaterally
  • Restrict registration
  • Revoke registration

• Civil
  • Civil fines ($10,000 per violation)
  • Consent decree

• Criminal
  • Arrest
  • Forfeiture
PHARMACEUTICAL ABUSE

ANONYMOUS REPORTING OF PHARMACEUTICAL ABUSE:

1-877-RX-ABUSE
OR
WWW.DEA.GOV
QUESTIONS?

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