

# DRUG DIVERSION: SENIOR POPULATION AT RISK

## *How well do you mitigate this risk?*

Drug diversion is a highly prevalent and persistent issue in healthcare. Drugs that are commonly abused are opioids, antidepressants, sedatives, and stimulants. While there are many instances of patient misuse of those drugs, 67% of opioid diversion is due to healthcare provider misuse with approximately 10% of healthcare workers overall being involved in drug abuse.<sup>1</sup>

Protenus is an organization focused on healthcare compliance analytics. They have reported that 47.2 million doses of medication were unaccounted for in 2018 due to healthcare provider misuse and/or theft. Eighteen percent of those 47.2 million doses occurred in Long Term Care (LTC) facilities.<sup>2</sup> Without proper mitigation and supervision, these diversions are difficult to identify and even more difficult to prevent. This can pose a great threat to patient safety and care- especially in LTC facilities where the patients rely heavily on healthcare workers for their basic needs. Patients have the right to expect that they are being cared for in a safe environment with providers who are not impaired and team members have the right to expect that they are working in a healthy workplace environment without their peers being impaired.

There are three important components to maintaining a safe environment for residents/patients and team members. They include regulatory compliance, education, and risk assessment.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Knowing what the regulatory mandates are and maintaining compliance with them are the primary measures necessary to ensure the safety of patients, residents, and team members. Areas of focus would include chain of custody, documentation of receipt, dispense and administration of drugs, and schedule of completed audits. Clear expectations and documented standard operating procedures are the foundation of a robust diversion program.

**Education:** It is important to provide education that is specific to clinical and non-clinical team members. By increasing awareness, team members will understand what drug diversion is and how important it is to report suspected diversion activity and impairment, as well as how to report their concerns.

**Risk Assessment:** A thorough, unbiased risk assessment of your diversion prevention program is crucial to identify opportunities for improvement that you may not be aware of.

Trexin Advisors are available to assist with regulatory compliance, risk assessment, and educational resources that will ensure such safety measures are in place. Click [here](#) and connect with us today.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jointcommission.org/resources/news-and-multimedia/blogs/dateline-tjc/2019/05/detecting-drug-diversion-in-the-health-care-workforce/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iadvanceseniorcare.com/curbing-opioid-abuse-and-diversion-in-long-term-care-facilities>