

47.2M Doses Lost Due to Hospital Employee Theft and Misuse

The Diversion Digest found that healthcare lost \$454M as a result of doses diverted by healthcare workforce throughout 2018

Baltimore -- Protenus, a healthcare compliance analytics platform that uses artificial intelligence to find anomalous behavior in our nation's leading health systems, announced today new research that details the effects of clinical drug diversion on healthcare organizations, providers, and patients. As the national conversation about opioid abuse continues, the effects of this epidemic on healthcare workers, who have easy access to controlled substances, remain underreported.

The research, published in the Diversion Digest, is the only report of its kind to compile and analyze publicly available data on clinical drug diversion incidents involving healthcare workers. Alarming, 94% of diversion incidents involved at least one opioid.

Drug diversion is "the transfer of a controlled substance from a lawful to an unlawful channel of distribution or use." Examples of this include a nurse stealing pills from an elderly patient or fraudulent prescriptions. In especially abominable cases, providers may tamper with vials or syringes of powerful controlled substances, potentially exposing themselves and patients to infectious diseases. These types of cases were publicly reported throughout 2018.

When comparing 2018 data to that of 2017, the number of incidents decreased by 11%. However, there was an alarming 126% increase in total volume of controlled substance doses lost, from 21 million doses in 2017 to 47 million doses in 2018.

"The Drug Diversion Digest is a useful resource for equipping healthcare leaders with insight into how the theft and misuse of controlled substances

impacts their workforces as well as the patients entrusted to their care,” stated Ken Perez, Vice President of Healthcare Policy at Omnicell. “This insight is critically important as the industry works to get ahead of this challenge and improve both patient and provider safety.”

Fueling this challenge in healthcare is not only the high-stress nature of many healthcare jobs, but also nearly unfettered access to these controlled substances. Healthcare staff work daily with some of the most powerful controlled substances available, know the control systems in place at their facility, and understand how to avoid them. This could be why it takes an average of 22 months for hospitals to catch diverters, according to the Diversion Digest. Current methods for detection are cumbersome and manual, leaving pharmacy professionals to look for the needle in the haystack.

“Current drug diversion monitoring is reactive, with pharmacy professionals only able to react to incidents that are brought to their attention, often after a devastating event has occurred. Fortunately, the technology now exists that enable health systems to get ahead of this critical challenge in healthcare,” said Nick Culbertson, Co-founder and CEO of Protenus. “Healthcare compliance analytics has the ability to shift health systems from reactive to proactive, allowing healthcare leaders to prevent future diversion incidents instead of reacting to issues after it’s too late.”

To request the 2019 Diversion Digest and receive future updates, please visit:

<https://www.protenus.com/2019-drug-diversion-digest>

About Protenus

The Protenus healthcare compliance analytics platform uses artificial intelligence to audit every access to patient records for the nation’s leading health systems. Providing healthcare leaders full insight into how health data is being used, and alerting privacy, security and compliance teams to inappropriate activity. Protenus helps our partner hospitals make decisions

about how to better protect their data, their patients, and their institutions. This year, Protenus was named the 2019 KLAS Category Leader in Patient Privacy Monitoring. In 2018 was named one of The Best Places to Work in Healthcare by Modern Healthcare and one of the Best Places to Work in Baltimore by the Baltimore Business Journal. Learn more at [Protenus.com](https://www.protenus.com) and follow us on Twitter @Protenus.

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