



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ★ DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION DIVERSION CONTROL DIVISION

Diversion News: March 2025

Leaders of Dangerous Drug Cartels in U.S. Custody

On Feb. 27, 2025, the United States took custody of 29 defendants from Mexico who face charges relating to racketeering, drug-trafficking, murder, illegal use of firearms, money laundering, and other crimes.



Among them was Rafael Caro Quintero, who is alleged to have been among those responsible for the 1985 brutal torture and murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena and others. Special Agent Camarena, pictured left, was investigating a multi-billion-dollar drug pipeline when he was kidnapped and killed. DEA honors his memory every day.

Every year, more than 80 million youth and adults stand together to celebrate [Red Ribbon Week](#) to honor the sacrifices made by Kiki Camarena and others on behalf of all Americans. On Feb. 28, 2025, DEA Headquarters staff wore red in remembrance of the man who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Defendants taken into U.S. custody include leaders and managers of drug cartels recently designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists, such as the Sinaloa Cartel, *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG)*, *Cártel del Noreste* (formerly Los Zetas), *La Nueva Familia Michoacana*, and *Cártel de Golfo* (Gulf Cartel).

The defendants collectively are alleged to have been responsible for the importation into the United States of massive quantities of poison, including cocaine, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and heroin, as well as associated acts of violence.



Read [more](#).

Physician Found Guilty of Writing Prescriptions for Profit

A federal jury in Charleston, W.V. convicted physician Brian McDevitt, D.O. on four counts of distribution of a controlled substance and found his medical license and the Chapmanville Medical Clinic, which he operated as a sole practitioner, subject to forfeiture.

Evidence showed that McDevitt wrote prescriptions for hydrocodone and alprazolam outside the scope of professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose. He also allowed others to use his federal DEA registration number to distribute the prescription drug phentermine.



McDevitt previously pled guilty on Jan. 20, 2010 to conspiracy to use a DEA registration number in violation of federal law and to engaging in monetary transactions in property derived from unlawful activity. On June 29, 2010, McDevitt was sentenced to one year and one day, followed by three years of supervised release, and fined \$60,000 for these prior convictions.

McDevitt is scheduled to be sentenced on May 22, 2025, and faces a maximum penalty of 50 years in prison. Read more about the [case](#).

DEA Launches Hospital Initiative to Prevent Drug Diversion



Seeing an increased number of regulatory violations, DEA launched an initiative to help hospitals better understand DEA regulations and expand on the prevention of diversion in a hospital setting.

Launched in Texas, the initiative known as “Operation Regulatory Wellness” is designed to provide educational training to hospitals registered throughout the state. DEA provides a one to two-hour educational

briefing that covers regulatory requirements, what to expect during a DEA inspection, and best practices for preventing diversion.

The operation was launched to proactively educate registrants on regulatory requirements and best practices with the goal of preventing drug diversion in hospitals.



DEA Extends Effective Date of Telemedicine Final Rules

DEA proposed to extend the effective date of final rules on telemedicine buprenorphine treatment and telemedicine continuity of care for Veterans Affairs patients. This allows for appropriate time to ensure both rules address continual patient accessibility to medical care.

On Jan. 17, 2025, the DEA and Department of Health and Human Services published two final rules related to the practice of telemedicine. These final rules were scheduled to become final on Feb. 18, 2025. The effective dates of the two final rules have now been delayed until March 21, 2025.

[Read more](#) about the expansion of buprenorphine treatment via telemedicine encounter and continuity of care via telemedicine for Veterans Affairs patients.

In September 2023, DEA hosted [public listening sessions](#) and received comments from 58 healthcare practitioners, experts, advocates, patients, and other members of the public to inform DEA's regulations on prescribing controlled substances via telemedicine. All comments and presentations became part of the official the official record for the purposes of the rulemaking.



Deadly Xylazine Emergence Continues across the United States



DEA has seen a surge in xylazine misuse. In the last four years, drug seizures containing fentanyl powder and xylazine have increased by 38 percent.

Xylazine is a powerful sedative that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved for veterinary use. Xylazine and fentanyl drug mixtures place users at a higher risk of suffering a fatal drug poisoning.

The agency continues to warn the public of a sharp increase in the trafficking of fentanyl mixed with xylazine.

The increasing presence of xylazine in the fentanyl supply is contributing to the rising death toll from the fentanyl epidemic. Drug trafficking organizations add xylazine to fentanyl to enhance the longevity of the effects of the drug and/or to increase the street value.

[Read more](#) about the dangers of xylazine.

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.



Lab Operator Convicted of \$4M Medicare Fraud Scheme

Feb. 25, 2025

Florence Doctor Sentenced for Distributing Oxycodone in "Sex for Scripts" Scheme

Feb. 12, 2025

New Haven Psychiatrist to Pay More Than \$450K to Settle False Claims Act and Controlled Substances Act Allegations

Feb. 8, 2025

Logan County Physician Found Guilty of Drug Crimes by Federal Jury

Feb. 7, 2025

Louisiana Doctor Sentenced for Illegally Distributing Over 1.8M Doses of Opioids in \$5.4M Health Care Fraud Scheme

Feb. 6, 2025

Four Pharmacists Sentenced for Roles in \$13M Medicare, Medicaid, and Private Insurer Fraud Conspiracy

Feb. 6, 2025



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.
