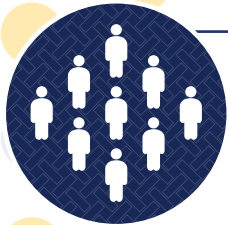


# Do You Know About Drug Diversion?

Drug diversion is the deflection of prescription drugs from medical sources into the illegal market. Drug diversion increases the cost of the Medicaid program. It's against the law to divert drugs—you can go to jail for it.



## Statistics show that prescription drugs are dangerous if used incorrectly:

- Every year more than a million people end up in the emergency room for taking prescription drugs incorrectly.
- The misuse of prescription painkillers claims the lives of more than 40 people daily—more than the combined number of people dying from using heroin and cocaine.



## Drug diversion can be performed by:

- Individuals like a family member, friend, or neighbor.
- Health care providers like doctors, clinic staff, and pharmacy employees.
- Businesses like drug manufacturing companies.



## Drug diversion can happen in a lot of ways; for example, when someone:

- Goes to more than one doctor to get the same prescription too often or too soon.
- Steals or buys medications from others.
- Signs or changes a prescription.



## Easy access to prescription drugs can lead to diversion:

- In a survey, almost 50 percent of teens said they believe prescription drugs are much safer than illegal street drugs, and 60 to 70 percent said that home medicine cabinets are the source of their drugs.
- The common types of prescription drugs diverted include anabolic steroids, central nervous system depressants, hallucinogens, opioids, and stimulants.



## Help prevent drug diversion:

- Use drugs as prescribed, safeguard prescription medications, and safely dispose of unused portions of prescription medications.
- If you see someone acting as if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they may be using prescription drugs illegally.
- Report suspected drug diversion and other fraud or abuse to local law enforcement, your State Medicaid agency, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG) by email at [HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov](mailto:HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov), even if the transaction is paid for with cash or private insurance rather than Medicaid program dollars.