



Control of prescriptions is a key to drug control.



Retail pharmacy work space.

drugs range between 200,000,000 and 250,000,000 dosage units per year. Some estimates greatly exceed this range.

Based upon surveys of cases and conservative projection, about 90 percent of this diversion is occurring at the retail level. This would be expected, since there is relatively little energy being expended to stop it.

Diversion at the retail level can occur in a number of ways; the most predominant of which are criminal diversion by a health professional (or an employee thereof), forged prescriptions, and theft. Among these, the most predominant is criminal diversion.

Eliminating criminal diversion at this level requires the availability of a broad range of techniques, authorities, and mechanisms. These include the following:

A thorough ability to conduct enforcement/

regulatory operations within the drug industry, down through the practice of pharmacy and medicine. This should be sufficient to identify and act upon regulatory and criminal violations by a health professional.

A thorough capability in law enforcement techniques, including surveillance, undercover techniques, rules of evidence, arrest and search procedures, court testimony, etc.

A full set of available sanctions ranging from administrative through regulatory to criminal prosecution, depending upon the nature of the violations and the situation.

The ability to use sanctions available at both the Federal and State levels.

Resources and support to conduct such operations on a scale sufficient to have an impact on the problem.

There is essentially no existing entity at the Federal, State, and local level with these capabilities.

To summarize the foregoing, the diversion of drugs from legitimate industry has been a lesser area of public and governmental attention. Due to shifting trends with the drug traffic, however, this facet of the drug problem is becoming more important. Law enforcement and regulatory agencies at all levels must begin making some adjustments to it.

The adjustment that a growing number of States are finding to be sufficient and meaningful is the Diversion Investigation Unit Program.

Under this program, DEA serves as a catalyst to bring funding, manpower, expertise and scattered jurisdiction together into a unified effort. These units are manned and run by State authorities. They are trained by DEA; and a DEA Agent is assigned on a full-