New Report Sheds Light on Health Care's 'Hidden' Epidemic - Hospital Drug Diversion - and its Role in the Opioid Crisis

Findings Based on Survey of 650 Health Care Professionals

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J., June 4, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) (NYSE: BDX), a leading global medical technology company, today released a new report based on an independent national survey that examines drug diversion in U.S. hospitals, an underreported contributor to the opioid epidemic.

Hospital drug diversion, when a health care worker "diverts" opiates or other controlled substances away from patients for personal use or sale, remains a significant challenge that is largely underdiscussed. Left undetected, diversion can lead to patient safety issues, harm to the diverter, and significant risk for the organization.

The report revealed a number of key factors that contribute to drug diversion:

- **Denial of the problem in their own hospitals**– Executives and providers (nurses, pharmacists and anesthesiologists) may be in denial about the diversion problem in their own facilities. The majority of providers surveyed (85%) were concerned about drug diversion in U.S hospitals, but only 20% believe diversion is cause for concern where they work. Despite this, half of respondents report they have observed suspicious activity in their hospitals that may have been evidence of diversion.
- **Detection technology is critical –** Health care professionals believe the tools they are using to detect diversion are only somewhat effective and expressed the need for improved real-time detection tools to identify diverters without generating false positives. Specifically, **59% of executives want more accurate data to reduce false positives;**54% would like artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning technologies and advanced analytics; and, 53% would like to see mandatory diversion training. Hospital executives and providers believe that, if given the appropriate resources, diversion can be significantly mitigated.
- **Stressful work environment** – Both executives and providers believe hospitals are stressful work environments, which may be a contributing factor that can make health care providers vulnerable to substance misuse. In fact, 78% of providers have known a peer who seemed **stressed "to the breaking point."**

"This report clearly shows how difficult the issue of drug diversion is to detect, as well as the challenges hospitals and health systems face with tracking and managing cases of diversion within their own facilities," said Perry Flowers, vice president of Medical Affairs at BD. "Diversion is not a new problem in health care, but recent advancements in diversion tracking include machine learning to intelligently analyze opioid transactions and reduce false positives. Establishing a culture of open dialogue and reporting that encourages recovery may also be key to efforts that address diversion."

The report — *Health Care's Hidden Epidemic: A Call to Action on Hospital Drug Diversion*— is based on findings from an independent survey of 651 health care executives and providers commissioned by the BD Institute for Medication Management Excellence and conducted by KRC Research, a global public opinion research consultancy. The survey collected data and opinions between February 20-28, 2019, from hospital executives, hospital diversion managers, anesthesiologists, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and a diverse group of nurses. To download the full report, visit bd.com/diversion-report.

The report also includes additional data and personal insights from clinical thought leaders to highlight barriers and solutions and bring context to the raw data. An included resource guide focuses more narrowly on ways to support hospitals as they address this problem – with guidance such as implementing machine learning and other technologies, and improving diversion education and training. The overall goal of the report is to foster a national conversation on the best ways to address this silent crisis.

The national opioid epidemic has reached unprecedented heights, with Americans now more likely to die from opioid overdose than in a car accident — nearly 200 people a day on average, according to a 2019 analysis by the National Safety Council.[1] Between 10% and 15% of the general population will misuse substances in their lives, including health care workers with access to controlled substances.[2] This creates a vulnerability beyond that of the general population, making diversion a very serious problem across hospitals and health systems.

"This report is an opportunity to encourage more robust discussion about diversion and how we can prevent it, detect it and help the hospital employees who are affected by it," said Ranjeet Banerjee, worldwide president, Medication Management Solutions at BD. "While there won't be a one-size-fits-all solution, we believe this report should spur additional research and ultimately lead to more actionable programs and resources for hospitals to adopt solutions."

About BD
BD is one of the largest global medical technology companies in the world and is advancing the world of health by improving medical discovery, diagnostics and the delivery of care. The company supports the heroes on the frontlines of health care by developing innovative technology, services and solutions that help advance both clinical therapy for patients and clinical process for health care providers. BD and its 65,000 employees have a passion and commitment to help enhance the safety and efficiency of clinicians' care delivery process, enable laboratory scientists to accurately detect disease and advance researchers' capabilities to develop the next generation of diagnostics and therapeutics. BD has a presence in virtually every country and partners with organizations around the world to address some of the most challenging global health issues. By working in close collaboration with customers, BD can help enhance outcomes, lower costs, increase efficiencies, improve safety and expand access to health care. For more information on BD, please visit bd.com.

[1]Odds of Dying – Data Details. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/all-injuries/preventable-death-overview/odds-of-dying/data-details; Accessed October 30, 2018

[2]Baldisserri MR. Impaired healthcare professional. Crit Care Med. 2007;35(suppl):S106-16.

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