



*Welcome to the October edition of the Trident Labs monthly newsletter. This issue examines the role of a physicians' Hippocratic Oath in the context of current news, and answers pertinent questions related to unexpected positive drug test results. From all of us at Trident Labs, we hope this issue finds you well and leaves you informed.*

## Drug Busts, Pharmacy Reforms & Two Ways Every Physician Should Protect their Practice

In response to the escalating opioid epidemic, pharmacy giant CVS announced major reforms the chain plans to enact on February 1st of 2018. This announcement came only three days after the New York Police Department seized over 140 pounds of fentanyl on September 18th, enough to cause respiratory failure in more than 21 million adult men. Forced to consider both the heavy responsibility to “do no harm” and research showing that half of opioid overdoses involve legally obtained prescriptions<sup>1</sup>, today’s physicians face greater liability for each opioid prescription than ever before. Amid this era of Hippocratic conflict, how can medical professionals safeguard their practice against poor patient outcomes?

### 1. Prescribe with Caution... And Information

Accurate prescription starts with a physician's understanding of relevant research and current events in addition to each patient's unique needs. In the spirit of aiding providers with this demanding task, we have included the recently-announced CVS Pharmacy reforms with the greatest patient impact:

- ▶ Required trial of immediate-release opioids before allowance of extended-release medication
- ▶ Restricted daily opioid dosages based on medication strength
- ▶ Mandatory counseling from pharmacists on dependence, addiction risks, and safe disposal
- ▶ Limited, 7-day supply for some new opioid prescriptions- less than half the length of the average national prescription<sup>2</sup>

### 2. Update Your Prescription Monitoring Program

Rampant opioid abuse has already forced prescription monitoring restructuring throughout the nation, but as new research continues to emerge, health care professionals must continue to resist complacency. In addition to conducting relevant research, physicians should constantly revise their “Best Practices” protocol. Routine drug testing is quickly becoming the new standard of care<sup>3</sup>, as urine and oral fluid testing grant physicians the ability to identify prescription misuse and avoid deadly drug interactions without patient interference<sup>4</sup>. No matter the state of your current prescription monitoring program, Trident Labs has a custom solution to grant you ease of mind. Contact us for more information.



## Comparison of Lethal Dose of Heroin and Fentanyl

Source: New Hampshire State Police Forensic Lab

# Flu Season & Toxicology: Can Cold Medicines Cause Unexpected Positives?

Welcome back to cold and flu season! Health care professionals are fluent in the many patient idiosyncrasies of this time of year, but how should physicians respond when patients blame cold medicine for an unexpected positive result on a drug test? Over-the-counter (OTC) remedies are generally regarded as safe, but **a handful of medications can cause unexpected positive**

**drug testing results.** A wide variety of OTC medications also contain alcohols, which may additionally affect test results. We suggest physicians collect a thorough list of both prescribed and OTC medications from each patient prior to sample collection.

OTC Medication Type	Example Medication Name	Potential Positive Result*
Cough Suppressants	Robitussin A-C	Codeine, Morphine <sup>6,8</sup>
Decongestants	Vicks VapoInhaler	Amphetamine, Methamphetamine <sup>7</sup>
Antihistamines/ Sleep Aids	Tylenol PM, Benadryl	Methadone, PCP <sup>9</sup>
Antihistamines/ Sleep Aids	Dimetapp	Amphetamine, LSD <sup>9</sup>

\*Test results are variable and depend on several factors including dosage, frequency of use, and metabolism. This table is not all-inclusive and should only be used as an educational tool.

## TRIDENT GIVES BACK

Trident Labs recently sponsored a team in the **26th Annual McLaren Golf Classic**, benefiting the McLaren Hospitality House. The charity event was hosted at Warwick Hills Golf & Country Club and raised over \$215,000 to support free and affordable lodging for patients and family members undergoing medical treatment at McLaren Flint Hospital.



Left to Right: McLaren Business Development Director John Rhodes & Trident Labs Vice President of Sales John Cribbs participating in the 2017 McLaren Golf Classic

**In Next Month's Issue:  
Everything you need to  
know about HPLC/MS/MS**

Morgan, Laboratory Technician at Trident Labs



## ASK A TOXICOLOGIST

**Q: Can over-the-counter diet pills cause an unexpected positive result for amphetamine?**

A: No. OTC diet pills will not cause a positive amphetamine confirmation result. However, some prescription diet pills used in treating obesity can result in a positive amphetamine test result.

**Q: Does my patient have a drinking problem?**

A: A low level of EtG, an alcohol metabolite, (less than 500 ng/mL) can be a result of incidental exposure to ethanol from products like mouthwash or hand sanitizer. A high level of EtG (> 10,000 ng/mL) indicates that the patient has ingested alcohol recently. Even one mixed drink (100 mL vodka and 300 mL orange juice) can result in a peak urine EtG concentration greater than 10,000 ng/mL after three hours<sup>10</sup>. However, frequent alcohol abuse cannot be determined from a single urine test, even when high levels of EtG are detected.



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