



vet shopping and drug diversion **A GUIDE FOR VETERINARIANS**

“Vet shopping” refers to the practice of soliciting multiple veterinarians under false pretenses to obtain prescriptions for controlled substances. Drug diversion is the illegal distribution or abuse of prescription drugs.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A VET SHOPPER

- New clients bringing in seriously injured animals with vague histories
- Old, incomplete, or missing veterinary care records
- Describing clinical signs that are inconsistent with findings on examination of the patient
- Describing clinical signs that require specific medications
- Requesting medications by name (e.g., Tramadol or Xanax)
- Refusing medications as prescribed and suggesting alternatives
- Requesting early refills of medication
- Claiming medications were lost or stolen
- Requesting refills, while missing appointments
- Uncooperative and aggressive behavior

WAYS TO MINIMIZE DRUG DIVERSION

- Be thorough about documentation when using or prescribing narcotics
- Restrict access to prescription pads
- Maintain strict refill policies
- Remind clients to turn in unused portions of medications to a controlled substance disposal location
- Minimize the use of commonly abused drugs, if possible
- Strictly control access, and regularly check inventory
- Look for signs of animal abuse during physical exams
- Contact police if you see suspicious behavior

For more information visit:

[AVMA.org/opioids](https://www.avma.org/opioids)