

# GUIDEPOST SOLUTIONS EXPANDS DEA REGULATORY COMPLIANCE PRACTICE

Guidepost Solutions, a global leader in domestic and international investigations, compliance solutions, monitoring, and security and technology consulting, announced the expansion of its Drug Enforcement Administration ([DEA](#)) [Regulatory Compliance Practice](#). Led by [Krista Tongring](#), senior managing director, the practice group has grown over the past year with the addition of several new multi-disciplinary team members. The DEA Regulatory Compliance Practice assists clients navigating the requirements of DEA regulations and minimizing financial and reputational risks that can arise from noncompliance. Clients include major pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors, health care solutions companies, pharmacies, hospital systems, and other DEA registrants.

“Under Krista’s direction and bolstered by a team of respected experts, our DEA Regulatory Compliance Practice continues to ensure our clients’ compliance with federal and state laws and regulations,” said Julie Myers Wood, CEO of Guidepost Solutions. “In today’s environment, DEA registrants throughout the controlled substances supply chain must take proactive steps in their self-assessments and communications with government regulators. Guidepost is well-suited to help companies take the appropriate actions to meet any regulatory requirement.”

Recent additions to the Guidepost DEA Regulatory Compliance Practice include:

- **[Robert J. Bell](#), senior managing director**, is the practice group’s most recent hire. Bell is a former senior executive with the DEA, with over 30 years of experience in federal, state, and local law enforcement. Bell last served as Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Chicago Division, where he led a staff of approximately 600 in 11 offices across Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. He oversaw investigations into transnational organizations involved in drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption, and violence. He also led investigations and compliance programs relating to the diversion of legally produced controlled substance pharmaceuticals.
- **[Sarah Pechnick](#), senior director**, joined Guidepost in 2022 and is an expert in pharmaceutical controlled substance investigations and regulatory compliance. Pechnick served with the DEA for more than 13 years, first as a diversion investigator, then as an instructor and course developer at the DEA Academy in Quantico, VA, staff coordinator of the Import/Export Section, and finally as lead staff coordinator/CSOS liaison within the Registration and Program Support Section.
- **[Debra Sandstrom](#), program manager, drug diversion specialist**, arrived at Guidepost in 2022. Sandstrom is a veteran program analyst, manager, and certified paralegal. Prior to joining Guidepost, she spent almost two decades working within the Department of Justice and DEA, finishing her tenure as a program analyst in the DEA

Additional Guidepost DEA Regulatory Compliance team members include:

- **Krista Tongring**, **senior managing director**, leads the Guidepost DEA Regulatory Compliance practice and oversees a variety of compliance engagements, monitorships, and investigatory matters. Tongring's client base includes an extensive array of DEA registrants for whom she performs various compliance functions, including the assessment, evaluation, and enhancement of numerous DEA registrants' Controlled Substances Monitoring Programs; performing DEA regulatory assessments, evaluations, and gap analyses, and implementing compliance enhancements, including "mock audits" and/or "mock" DEA inspections; conducting pre-acquisition assessment and post-acquisition assessment of controlled substance protocols for DEA registrants to identify potential risks for the potential buyer; and assisting clients seeking DEA registrations. Previously, she was a senior attorney with the DEA Diversion and Regulatory Litigation Section and the acting section chief in the DEA's Office of Compliance.
- **Susannah Herkert**, who was recently promoted to **senior managing director**, served with the DEA for more than 15 years, beginning her career as a diversion investigator and lead investigator on numerous criminal/civil cases. Herkert was the lead investigator on numerous cases resulting in the federal convictions and/or civil fines of physicians, pharmacists, and co-conspirators. After her success in the field, she transferred to Quantico and "wrote the book" on how to train DEA personnel to successfully investigate violators of the Controlled Substances Act. She was the first unit chief for the Diversion Specialized Training Unit and the acting unit chief for the Diversion Training Unit, which trained all incoming DEA diversion investigators. Throughout her career, Herkert has testified in federal court on diversion related matters, including providing expert testimony. Her investigative techniques have been adopted by DEA diversion investigators throughout the United States and her expertise is recognized by prosecutors nationwide.
- **Russell C. Holske**, **senior managing director**, spent more than 30 years with the DEA overseeing global investigations and serving in leadership positions in the United States, Asia Pacific, and Europe. Most recently, he was the regional director of the DEA's Senior Executive Service leading operations based in Bangkok, Thailand, operating as the principal U.S. official in Asia for all narcotics, pharmaceutical, and money laundering operations. Prior to this assignment, Holske served as chief of the DEA's Pharmaceutical Investigations where he engaged with the private sector to address compliance issues and delivered comprehensive situational presentations to medical and pharmaceutical groups to tackle the opioid crisis. He also spearheaded the largest diversion operation in U.S. law enforcement history to confront rogue doctors and pharmacies.
- **William J.C. Matthews** was recently promoted to **senior managing director** and is a proven leader and strategist with 24 years of experience in complex investigations, international operations, security/personnel recovery, and training with the DEA. For nearly two decades, he served in investigative and leadership roles in support of the DEA's global Special Operations Division throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, Central America, and Europe. He and his teams spearheaded some of the Department of Justice's most sensitive and significant criminal investigations and related training.

"Our team of former career DEA officials brings a wealth of professional expertise in pharmaceutical controlled substance investigations, regulatory compliance, and drug diversion training," said Tongring. "The expansion of this team over the past year is testament to the important work done for numerous clients by the entire DEA Regulatory Compliance team. Current and future DEA registrants can feel confident with our hands-on approach to solving their DEA regulatory compliance program needs."



## KRISTA TONGRING

Executive Vice President, DEA Regulatory Compliance Practice



## ROBERT BELL

Senior Managing Director



## SARAH PECHNICK

Senior Director

Sarah Osborne Pechnick is an expert in pharmaceutical controlled substance investigations and regulatory compliance. She proudly served with the Drug Enforcement Administration for more than 13 years. Ms. Pechnick began her career with the DEA as a Diversion Investigator. For a period of ten years while stationed in Wisconsin and Florida, respectively, she led and completed regulatory and investigative work resulting in criminal convictions, civil fines, and administrative consequences. She utilized her analytical skills to identify potential targets and to illustrate trends of pharmaceutical diversion. During her tenure as a Diversion Investigator, Ms. Pechnick maintained outstanding ratings throughout and was the recipient of numerous performance and on-the-spot awards related to her contributions.



## DEBRA SANDSTROM

Program Manager, Drug Diversion Specialist



## SUSANNAH HERKERT

Senior Managing Director



## RUSSELL HOLSKER JR., MBA, CCI

Senior Managing Director



## WILLIAM MATTHEWS

Senior Managing Director



## JULIE MYERS WOOD

Chief Executive Officer

As the Chief Executive Officer of Guidepost Solutions, I focus on helping corporations resolve problems with government agencies, and ensure they are proactively addressing compliance requirements. Prior to joining the private sector, I held leadership positions with the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security, Commerce, Treasury and Justice. This includes serving as the Head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security's largest investigative component, as well as the Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement and the Chief of Staff for the Criminal Division at the Department of Justice. Throughout my government and private sector career, I have helped develop, implement and execute compliance programs and crisis management plans and responses across a wide range of industries for numerous companies. I am nationally recognized as a speaker for my expertise on compliance, security, immigration and other law enforcement issues and have testified before Congress.