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All Those “Lettered” Government Agencies

OVERVIEW

My regional pharmacy manager contact told me that there are so many government agencies responsible for overseeing the manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and distribution and dispensing of pharmaceutical drugs, it reminds her of the 1951 Abbott and Costello routine “Who’s on First?” (I was not born yet, but if you have not watched this routine, I have provided a link to it.¹) Both the routine and sorting out the agencies in charge are very confusing, to say the least. In this chapter, I try to give an overview of each agency and how the agency is tasked to enforce the Drug Quality and Security Act.

THE FEDERAL AND STATE BOYS AND GIRLS

The primary federal agencies responsible for overseeing the manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and distribution and dispensing of pharmaceutical drugs are the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The primary state agencies are the state boards of pharmacy, the state departments of public safety, and the state medical boards. Let’s start with the FDA.