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Some Patients in Rehab Centers May Go to Great Lengths to Obtain Drugs

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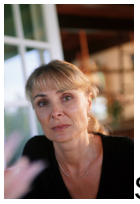 Several recent cases of drugs smuggled into substance abuse treatment centers highlight how difficult it is to eradicate drug use in these facilities, according to *USA Today*.

In New Jersey this summer, prosecutors arrested seven men, including five employees, at Veterans Affairs treatment facilities on charges of distributing heroin, crack cocaine and painkillers.

In Minnesota, a patient at a locked state drug treatment facility was sentenced to four years in prison, after she and two other patients used heroin and other drugs smuggled in shampoo bottles and pockets of jeans by an accomplice outside the center. Now clients must undress for a contraband search when they are admitted to the facility.

"Addicts will go to great lengths to get drugs," said Carol Falkowski, former director of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division at Minnesota's Department of Human Services, who also worked at the Hazelden Foundation. Patients at facilities can often convince friends, family or their former dealers to smuggle in drugs for them, she said. "It happens all the time," she noted. "Historically, it's something that every treatment center has to deal with."

At Origins Recovery Centers on South Padre Island, Texas, patients are thoroughly searched and are tested for drugs twice a week, according to CEO Ben Levenson. "These are survivors. They are super resourceful. Many of them are super bright. They try everything. I've seen them hide pills in the seams of their dress shirts," he said. The facility conducts deep background checks on employees, and regularly tests them for drugs.

The Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, California has a highly trained security team that includes a dog trained to detect drugs, strict protocols for all visitors and random drug testing of patients, according to spokesman Russ Patrick.