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WHITEPAPER

Operate with Proof:

A 2026 Guide for North America Healthcare

Executive Note

Across healthcare, one thing is clear: rules now expect proof in motion, not paperwork after the fact. In U.S. healthcare, the Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA) completes its journey in 2026, requiring trading partners to share and verify serialized drug data electronically and on time. This means every medicine pack must be traceable with digital handshakes between partners **before it moves further** – turning what used to be a back-office chore into a **release condition on the floor,** and raising the bar on reliability for patients and providers alike.

This mini-paper explains what we mean by turning rules into reliable operations. It's the shift from "document later" to "enforce now," carried out through three practical ideas with the help of Locus:

- **a single operational record** everyone works from,
- **in-plan validation** so bad data doesn't reach the dock, and
- **real-time execution,** so rules trigger real actions—not just alarms

This is how Locus runs plans against governed data, changes the plan in-run, and leaves a clean, exportable trace.

Why 2026 is different for healthcare

The rules are live

DSCSA makes serialized, electronic exchange the norm in the U.S. drug supply chain. Dispensers, wholesalers, and manufacturers must identify and trace packages with interoperable data—and verify on time, before goods continue downstream. The stabilization periods are behind us; the last mile of adoption is about execution.

That "execution" reality is the heart of what healthcare operators are navigating now. DSCSA compliance isn't only a compliance box; it changes the operating rhythm. When verification becomes a release gate, it reshapes how teams think about data quality, partner readiness, exception handling, and speed under constraint.

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What “good” looks like in action

A reliable healthcare network shows four habits in practice. The goal isn’t to add layers of monitoring; it’s to build a run where proof is produced by the work itself.

Traceability with proof: Every unit or delivery has a searchable trail of identity, custody, and condition, and each handoff is visible to the partner that needs to see it. In healthcare, that includes serialized checks for suspect products. The audit trail is produced by the run itself, not reconstructed from emails.

What this means operationally: traceability is not “after the fact.” It is embedded at the point where work is released and accepted. The result is faster response when something goes wrong, and less downstream chaos when something simply doesn’t match

Exception prevention at the edge: In cold supply chains, when temperature drifts, a policy reroutes or swaps the asset. The key is that exceptions don’t wait to become incidents; they’re addressed while the run is still salvageable.

What this means operationally: the system does more than surface risk—it changes the plan early enough to protect integrity.

One plan that updates with reality: Contact centers, planners, stores/depots, and field teams share the same live state. A decision made in planning is visible on the floor; a proof captured in the field is visible to the teams coordinating care and service. Disputes and duplicate effort shrink.

What this means operationally: instead of “two truths” (a planning truth and a field truth), you get one living record that reduces rework and time lost in reconciliation

Right-first-time documents and labels: Declarations, labels, and required fields are generated from governed truth (e.g., SKU attributes, batch/lot data) and validated before release. If anything is missing or out of spec, the job does not advance. This prevents terminal holds and late-stage rework.

What this means operationally: correctness is checked at the point where it’s cheapest to fix, not when the clock is already ticking downstream.

What “good” looks like in action

From DSCSA to dependable service

By November 2026, DSCSA expects serialized, electronic product tracing and timely verification as a normal condition of movement. For many wholesalers and large dispensers, this extends progress already made. For smaller nodes, it’s a step change: they must move from “paper tolerated” to digital by default. The advantage of doing this well goes beyond the rule: it improves recall readiness and counterfeit resilience, and reduces patient risk during shortages or disruptions.

That last point is what often gets missed when DSCSA is framed purely as “compliance.” In practice, DSCSA maturity is a reliability strategy. When you can verify and trace in time, you shorten response loops, reduce uncertainty, and keep fragile systems from freezing under pressure.

What that looks like on the floor

A serialized verification feed is tied directly to a **release gate:** if data is inconsistent or missing, the carton doesn’t advance.

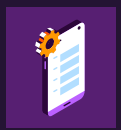
When cold-chain thresholds are breached, the system **changes the route or asset** in the tool, and everyone sees the update.

When a handoff occurs, **custody and ePOD** land in the same record the planner used, no re-entry.

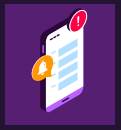
Use Case: Pharma Diagnostics Network

A leading diagnostics provider operating in 190+ cities with ~4,000 field agents digitized end-to-end home collections with the help of Locus.

What changed in the operating model:



A custom mobile app replaced manual steps; orders from app/web/call center were auto-batched, optimized, and assigned with real-time tracking and ePOD.



Automated alerts (SLA risk, low battery, customer events) enabled proactive interventions.

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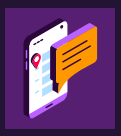
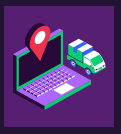


Customers received live updates and confirmations, lifting trust and CSAT.

The routing engine protected the 2-3-hour lab window to maintain sample integrity.



A control dashboard provided live plan-vs-actual across routes, fleet, and performance.

THE RESULT

Faster routes, no temperature breaches, and cleaner proofs in the same operational record used by planners and contact centers.

This example matters because it makes the “operate with proof” idea concrete: the proof (ePOD, status events, integrity controls) isn’t assembled later—it is emitted by the run and shared across teams that act on it.

Where to focus in 2026

If you’re trying to make DSCSA execution stick (especially across a mixed network of large and small partners), these are the three most practical focus points:

Make serialized checks part of release, not reconciliation.

Tie cold-chain thresholds to automatic plan changes.

Give smaller partners a lightweight digital handoff so the “weakest node” doesn’t slow the network.

The common thread: bring checks forward (to release), bring enforcement closer to the edge (where work happens), and reduce partner friction so adoption doesn’t stall.

Three moves that make compliance practical

These moves translate the DSCSA intent into a repeatable operating model—one that can scale across sites, partners, and volumes without creating more manual work.

Move 1: Unify data to decide action

Start with a single operational record that connects orders, product truth (SKU, batch/lot, cold-chain), compliance fields, partners, assets, and lanes. Make planning the actuator of compliance: if required data is incomplete, the plan doesn't release. Decisions execute inside the run, and the system keeps the proof.

Move 2: Prevent exceptions at the edge

Place verification where work happens. Before movement, run digital checks. During movement, apply policy actions for temperature rules that actually change the route or asset. At handoff, verify identity and custody inside the same system that records proof.

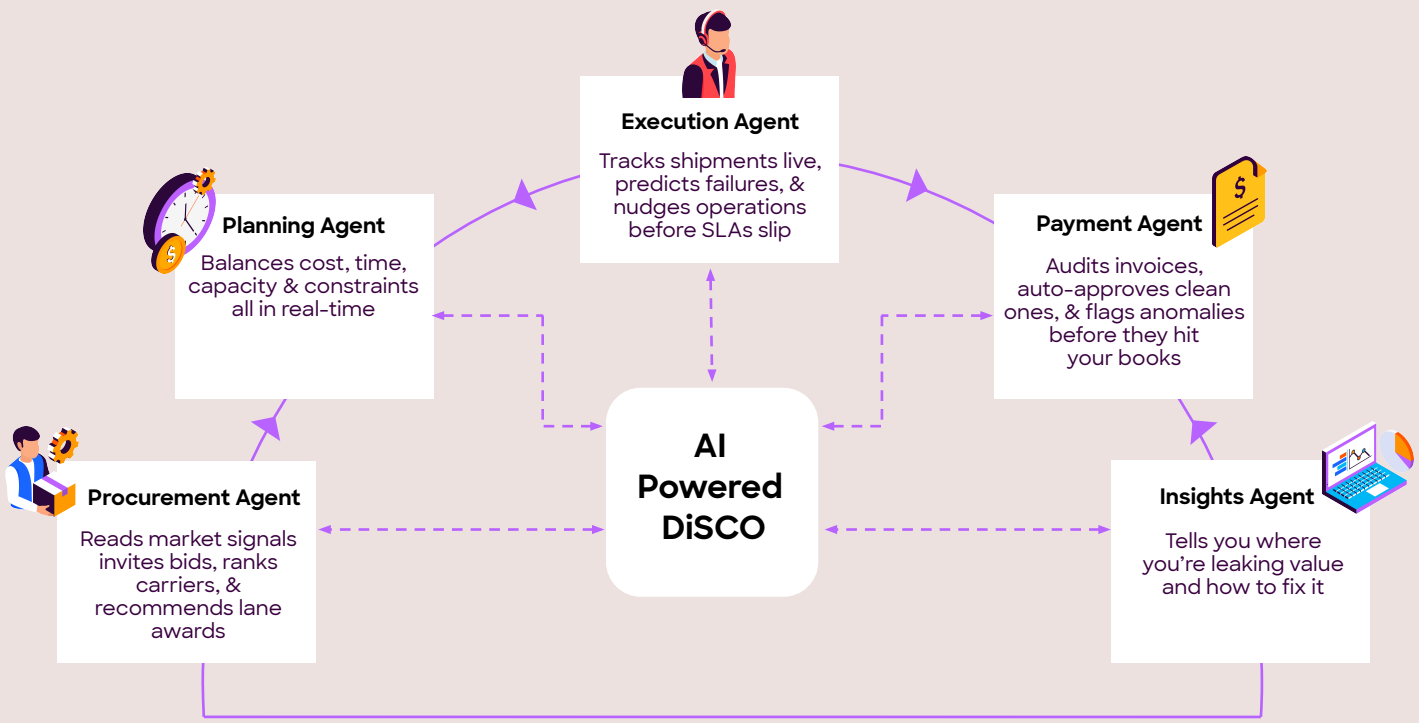
Move 3: Design adoption so it sticks

Change that adds dashboards but doesn't remove work will stall. Roll out in narrow waves with clear definitions of done. Give managers and field teams the same live view and a small, stable KPI set, then train against the top failure modes until responses are reflexive.

How Locus turns policy into proof in motion

Locus connects orders, product truth, compliance fields, partners, assets, and lanes into one live record, validates labels/serialization before release, and enforces rules while work is moving. DiSCO (Digital Supply Chain Officer) is the agentic AI that powers this run—sensing issues, deciding the next best move, and acting in the tool, with an audit trail by default.

In the same operating layer, the platform supports procurement, planning, execution, payment, and insight workflows, so proof isn't fragmented across tools and teams.



- **Orchestrates procure-to-pay on a modular TMS:** one place to plan, execute, and prove.
- **Validates documentation** pre-tender (labels, HS/VAT/IOSS, serialization, DPP) so bad data never ships.
- **Automates workflows & predicts risk** (SLA, cold-chain, ZEZ, capacity), then applies live policy enforcement, reroutes, asset swaps, or OOH/PUDO when needed.
- **Optimizes fleet mix** across captive/3PL/crowd and reallocates orders intelligently during spikes.
- **Handles customer reschedules** via natural-language prompts, keeping operations and communications in sync.

8-12% **reduction** in freight costs

40% **faster** planning cycles

10-15% **SLA** improvement

15% **lower** emissions

Automation builds structure; agentic AI adds judgment and adaptability.

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Battle-tested in 350+ deployments across 30+ countries, Locus is an agentic TMS for all-mile, all-channel, trusted by enterprises like Unilever, Nestlé, CP Axtra and many more.

The platform unifies orders, capacity, and carriers into a living plan, with AI co-pilots guiding real-time decisions to protect SLAs and reduce waste.

In 2025, *Locus joined Ingka Group* (IKEA Retail), accelerating its mission to build faster, smarter, and greener supply chains.

Since 2015, Locus has powered billions of deliveries with measurable savings and sustainability impact. Headquartered in Bangalore with teams across the U.S., U.K., UAE, and SEA, its 170+ experts are redefining how the world moves goods across all channels and all miles.

1.5B+
Total deliveries optimized

17M+ KGs
Reduction in GHG emissions

$320M+
Savings in logistics costs

GROWTH, DELIVERED.