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The Pharmacy Solutions

The Company

The pharmacy provides pharmaceutical services for seniors ensuring the right dose is administered to the right patient within the Long Term Care housing environment. The Pharmacy solves medication problems that may interfere with the goals of therapy and provides an e-kit of back up medicines and over the counter medication. Further, they offer specialty compounding that save facilities money and the pharmacy’s experts continually monitor and maintain the best part D plans for resident’s needs. The company provides these medications to both skilled nursing and assisted living facilities. In many ways the company is a hybrid of a hospital pharmacy and retail pharmacy.

Medication is provided to long term care centers in single dose blister packs that contain all the medication for a single patient, in a single pack. The pharmacy has the equipment to build these packs in house and in multiple production lines. Their pharmacists bring over 75 years of experience to the table branding themselves as geriatric medication therapy experts.

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THE PHARMACY SOLUTIONS

THE CHALLENGE

The pharmacy currently provides services to 19 facilities and 1400 patients.” Since each patient can have multiple medications, the pharmacy manages thousands of medications and must do so in compliance with Part D plans which are highly regulated. Any paperwork out of mandate results in loss of payment to the provider. The pharmacy sees their role as not just to ship medications to the facilities, but to ensure that the correct medication and quantities reach the right patient.

Ensuring that the right medications are shipped to facilities is a time consuming process. With an efficient and productive fulfillment process, medications are prepared and ready for shipment soon after receiving the order. However, the bottle neck to the process has been the validation of each prescription before shipment.

Our team fills about 22,000 scripts per month, or nearly 1,000 every working day. If a residence home has 87 prescriptions to be filled, in cannot be 86 or 88 but MUST be 87, every time.

– The Pharmacy Solutions

Likewise, nursing staff at each facility faces the daunting, but necessary, task of accounting for each drug that is received into the facility. Depending on the volume of medications coming to the facility each day, nursing staff often spend hours manually receiving medications. This is time that nursing staff should be spending with patients or doing other important duties. Further, nursing staff normally does not know what they will be receiving for their patients because the volume of information takes time to disseminate.

Given the task of validating the outgoing shipments, automate the receiving of incoming medications, and producing timely information to nursing staff, the pharmacy team investigated the use of RFID. Upon researching the technology and its promise, the pharmacy decided to incorporate RFID inlays into their current pharmacy labels placed on each pack of medications.



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MSM SOLUTIONS

With the promise of obtaining greater accuracy and productivity with the use of RFID, the pharmacy chose Zebra Technologies' partner, MSM Solutions to help test the feasibility of incorporating the technology into their current fulfillment and receiving processes. The company looked at RFID but came upon the challenge of where to place the tag due to issues caused by foil packaging in the blister packs and the liquid medications we commonly provide. MSM provided the expertise to design the best smart label for this application. After several successful testing iterations, MSM delivered a turn-key system comprising of all necessary components – smart labels, Zebra printers/encoders, RFID readers and custom software.

The pharmacy supplemented their current thermal printing with Zebra RFID printers to encode each outgoing pack of medications. The Zebra printers enabled the pharmacy to maintain their high rate of fulfillment even though each label was now being encoded. MSM and Zebra ensured the printing process was unchanged by integrating the printers to the pharmacy's software. To the pharmacist, nothing had changed in fulfilling and labeling medications.

Now that the medications were tagged, MSM's PortalTrack™ software ensured the benefits of RFID were realized in the shipping and receiving processes. In order to utilize the technology each home and the shipping office at the pharmacy was outfitted with a RFID reading station. Each station has a UHF RFID reader along with a touch screen PC. Before drugs are released to the carrier, each facility's outgoing drugs are scanned for accuracy. PortalTrack™ alerts the shipping manager if there are any found discrepancies. Likewise, when the nursing staff receives medications, they simply place the boxes onto the reading station and the software checks in the drugs completing an electronic chain of custody from the home to the facility. The use of RFID has reduced the validation and receiving of a shipment of medications from hours and minutes to mere seconds. PortalTrack™ provided the assurance of knowing that the correct drugs have

shipped, when it was received and where it is located. Finally, through its cloud based architecture, PortalTrack™ securely presents this information through a reporting Dashboard to relevant the pharmacy personnel at all facilities.

Due to the speed and accuracy of the system, the pharmacy and MSM have expanded the system to track all returned medication from the facility back to the pharmacy. Medications are returned for a variety of reason like patient discharge and change of prescriptions.

When managing people's medications, 99.9% accuracy is simply not good enough.

– The Pharmacy Solutions

POST IMPLEMENTATION OF RFID

The pharmacy has been using this complete system for over a number of years with outstanding results. Because of the successful implementation and use of RFID, the pharmacy staff can bring more focus on patient care and monitor and maintain the best part D plans for residential needs. In many of the states in which the pharmacy operates, Assisted Living Facilities are growing. We strongly believe we can bring our medication solutions to these homes as well as the ones in which we are operating today. The pharmacy has become a real proponent of this technology. They are part of the Manufacturing Healthcare Association and have promoted it in that, and other venues. Patients and their families can feel more secure knowing their medications are dispensed in accurate and timely manner.



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