

CASE STUDY

SOUTHERN OHIO MEDICAL CENTER PUTS PATIENTS FIRST WITH INNOVATIVE SPECIALTY PHARMACY SERVICES

**Southern Ohio
Medical Center**

The Mission: Making a Difference



**Rory Phillips, BSpH,
MBA, CPEL, RPh**

Director of Pharmacy &
Respiratory Services
~ Southern Ohio Medical
Center (SOMC)

INTRODUCTION AND INTENDED OUTCOME

Founded in 1954, Southern Ohio Medical Center (SOMC) is located in Portsmouth, Ohio. The Main Campus features a 211-bed not-for-profit hospital providing emergency and surgical care to the surrounding community. These services include an inpatient pharmacy and several outpatient clinics offering various healthcare services ranging from oncology and cardiology to rheumatology and primary care, among others. With 60+ offices throughout southern Ohio and northeastern Kentucky, SOMC has 2,600+ full- and part-time staff and 140+ physicians, specialists, and advanced practice providers (APPs).

The health system's mission is to make a difference in the lives of its patients, employees, and the community. With this mission in mind, Director of Pharmacy & Respiratory Services Rory Phillips, BSpH, MBA, CPEL, RPh, began exploring how to create a specialty pharmacy to better serve SOMC's patients and medical staff members.

THE VISION: IMPLEMENTING SPECIALTY PHARMACY WITH WHITE GLOVE SERVICE

Historically, SOMC worked with a mail-order specialty pharmacy to meet patient needs. "The physicians and APPs were happy with the process, but I wanted to deliver a higher level of patient and medical staff satisfaction," explains Phillips. "I wanted patients and medical staff members to be able to rely on people from here — people who truly understood and cared about the local community." However, as he began researching who could help him achieve this goal, he found many operated on a call center model. Phillips ultimately chose CPS Solutions, LLC (CPS), one of the nation's largest pharmacy and hospital service providers, to help build and manage SOMC's specialty pharmacy.

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\$2.4M

PATIENT FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE, 2023

92%

TREATMENT ADHERENCE

96%

PATIENT SATISFACTION

100%

MEDICAL STAFF
SATISFACTION

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“CPS’ emphasis on local care was a big deciding factor for me,” he says. “But so was their approach. They spent a day and a half with me and others on the leadership team to ensure buy-in and gain a thorough understanding of our health system’s operations and priorities.”

THE APPROACH: DELIVERING A LOCAL CARE MODEL

SOMC is CPS’ longest-running specialty pharmacy client. With CPS, team members are on site, which means medical staff members and patients talk to their neighbors to help them navigate the complex specialty pharmacy landscape. “As far as patients and medical staff members are concerned, CPS pharmacists and liaisons are SOMC staff,” says Phillips. “This is exactly what I wanted — specialty pharmacy staff building relationships with patients and medical staff members, giving patients familiar people to reach out to for help.”

“[CPS] Pharmacists and liaisons assist physicians and patients in managing all of their prescriptions. It is a holistic approach and includes all of the patient’s medications. The CPS team contacts the patient and manages new and refill prescriptions proactively,” explains Phillips.

In 2023 alone, SOMC provided \$2.4M in financial assistance for its patients. “CPS’ patient-centered approach to specialty pharmacy is truly making a difference at SOMC,” says Phillips. Medical staff members and patient satisfaction scores are 100% and 96%, respectively, for 2023. “That, to me, is a clear demonstration of our success,” he adds. “When specialty pharmacy staff can talk to patients or colleagues about their kids, their job, or even the county fair, they put patients at ease and trust pharmacy staff to care for them.”

THE COLLABORATION: WORKING TOGETHER FOR ADDED VALUE

One of the aspects Phillips appreciates most about CPS is that they are a true teammate for the long run. “Over the years, our goals and priorities have evolved — and CPS has been willing to shift right along with us.”

A significant goal for SOMC is to improve patient care through chronic disease management (CDM). That’s why the health system implemented CPS’ CDM services in all family practice clinics in late 2021. SOMC also worked with CPS to focus on medication adherence, which resulted in patient adherence reaching 92% last year.

Since the third quarter of 2023, CPS has been assisting SOMC with its transition of care processes and the hospitals’ Medicare Star Ratings. The goal is to minimize readmissions, which can improve patient outcomes while also reducing hospital costs incurred for inpatient stays and procedures. Through this process, CPS coordinates prior authorizations for medications given to SOMC patients at the time of discharge and also submits patient medication counseling documentation in a web-based performance

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information tool to give SOMC credit for performing medication therapy management. SOMC’s specialty staff and the CPS team manage all patient medications holistically; they are doing the work. They are now documenting this work to increase Medicare Star Ratings, thereby reducing direct and indirect renumeration (DIR) fees and improving prescription reimbursement. “It’s one more example of how CPS goes the extra mile.”

THE RESULT: INCREASING QUALITY OF CARE & ORGANIZATIONAL REVENUE

In just 10 years, SOMC opened six community pharmacies and has secured space for building pharmacies seven and eight. Revenue growth was dramatic in SOMC’s first year of operation — and they have continued to achieve double-digit gains year after year. “With CPS’ help, the pharmacy is no longer considered a cost center — it’s a revenue-generating operation,” notes Phillips.

Consequently, SOMC’s specialty pharmacy services became a lifeline for the community. As chain pharmacies began closing stores in the area, some patients were faced with the prospect of driving long distances to get their medications. “The addition of the specialty pharmacy has just lowered barriers for patients to access medication,” he says. “Beyond that, it’s enhanced the quality of care SOMC clinics and medical staff members can deliver.”

Phillips and SOMC do not plan to stop there. “Because CPS represents multiple organizations, they can address limited distribution drugs with manufacturers and payer lockouts with health plans better than I can as a stand-alone pharmacy,” explains Phillips. That dedicated support, amongst many other reasons, is why the health system has signed a contract with CPS through 2035.



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