Pharmacy Management With the Parata Beacon® System

Maintaining a large inventory without sacrificing safety and efficiency.

SHINGLE SPRINGS
Health & Wellness Center
Healthcare for All

John Bodtker
Pharmacist
~ Shingle Springs Health & Wellness Center

PRIMARY INTENDED OUTCOME

There are approximately 22,000 independent pharmacies in the United States, according to the National Community Pharmacists Association. The modern pharmacy landscape is constantly changing and growing to serve communities large and small, while facing hurdles including reimbursement issues, complex medication regimens, and narrowed patient access.

Given these challenges, pharmacy managers must choose wisely when investing in equipment and technology intended to maximize space, accuracy, and productivity. The Beacon Pharmacy Inventory Management System supplies a range of scalable technologies and strategies to meet pharmacy needs and improve operations no matter the size or scope of a particular facility.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2016, John Bodtker was working at an independent pharmacy in the San Francisco Bay Area and seriously considering pharmacy ownership. His direction shifted a bit when a job posting appeared for a startup pharmacy manager in his hometown of rural Placerville, California.

The Shingle Springs Health & Wellness Center is an Indian Health Service/Tribal/Urban Indian Health pharmacy owned and operated by the local Miwok Tribe. Serving a unique community can change some of the usual assumptions of pharmacy management, including the common constraints around relying upon a specific formulary.

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"Our philosophy is not the same as a typical retail pharmacy," Bodtker noted. For example, he said, "We don't have a strict focus on lean inventory. We try, instead, to have everything in stock to provide the best customer service possible."

Maintaining an expansive inventory, however, can create spatial, organizational, and access challenges that could potentially contribute to inefficiency and dispensing errors. The right solution would provide storage, enable speed, and enhance safety, all at the same time.

THE DECISION

Bodtker was a decision maker involved in choosing equipment for Shingle Springs before the doors even opened in June 2017. He researched shelving options and found that Beacon's variety of high-density storage cabinets were a very attractive feature for a new startup pharmacy with large storage needs. "They provided us with a lot of space to start with," Bodtker said, "and we have room to grow."

Beacon also provides the ability to pull medications directly from storage, without having to rely on or bypass a robotic dispensing system. "This was a key point for us," Bodtker said.

THE RESULTS

Shingle Springs has been accepting commercial, state, and Medicaid plans since December 2017. They currently average 100 prescriptions a day, and they are only picking up speed.

"We have a lot of patients with complicated drug regimens and those who live in remote areas," Bodtker said. "When they come in for their visits, efficiency is nice. We try to button everything up and can usually get things answered pretty quickly."

Working from a number of formularies means the need to shelve a vast inventory. The Beacon storage system consolidates the pharmacy's footprint through minimizing on-hand inventory, increasing inventory turns, and reducing expired medications.

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Beacon Reduces Short Fills

Pharmacy supply deficits can result in partial fills, which are less than optimal for both the patient and the pharmacy. Utilizing the Beacon system, the Shingle Springs Health & Wellness Center pharmacy was able to increase their number of completely filled prescriptions from 85% to 97.8% over the course of one year.

DATE RANGE	PARTIAL FILL PERCENTAGE
July 2017	13-15%
November 2017	5-9%
March 2018	2.5-4.5%
July 2018	> 2.2%

Shingle Springs is able to provide a high level of service thanks to their ability to consult with in-house providers combined with a comprehensive inventory, stocked and dispensed via a tailored Parata pharmacy storage solution.

THE CONCLUSION

Shingle Springs currently employs the Beacon high-density storage solution as well as the company's associated DeliverRx will-call cabinet. The will-call system utilizes the same "directed by light" and bar-code identification technology that other Parata solutions rely on, minimizing staff members' learning curve. DeliverRx securely contains all will-call prescriptions in a single, easy-to-find location, further reducing customer wait times and making pick-ups clearer and less prone to error. Bodtker hopes to purchase a compatible refrigeration unit as well.

The pharmacy is also incorporating Parata's SmartCardRx™ blister-packaging system within the next year. "We currently have 30 or so patients on manual-fill blister packs," Bodtker said, " and we want to establish a solid client base."

Finally, Shingle Springs will be expanding to include a long-term care facility on the reservation, which will require an automated medication dispensing system. "Parata's PharmLoc™ cabinet would be the perfect segue for us," Bodtker said.

When a single company provides a comprehensive, configurable system, growing a pharmacy is easy and quality control stays in sync.

"I have worked in pharmacies doing less that felt much busier," Bodtker said. "We save footsteps and we get prescriptions to people quicker and safer."

For Shingle Springs, Bodtker said, relying on Parata and Beacon means increased efficiency along with greater dependability. "Thanks to Beacon, a larger inventory actually means we are less harried and more accurate. Our error binder is thin because there just isn't much going into it."

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