

TouchPoint Medical™ MedDispense™, the solution for institutional pharmacies servicing long-term care facilities

Direct savings, efficiency improvements and DEA compliance measures are three areas in which pharmacies see a return on its MedDispense investment.

For several years, an increase in stricter facility mandates, compliance policies and regulations has been the norm for the healthcare industry. Quickly adapting to these changes is imperative and will require an investment in technology. In addition, it is a major focus for healthcare providers to not only comply, but also show a return on these investments.

Institutional pharmacies servicing long-term care (LTC) facilities are one segment of the healthcare industry affected by the stricter mandates, policies and regulations. Many of these pharmacies have found the TouchPoint Medical MedDispense™ system makes it easy to quickly adapt to the changes, lowers drug costs and has a high return on investment. The ROI is a result of direct savings, efficiency improvements and DEA compliance measures. Here is a look at how it is generated in each of these areas:

DIRECT SAVINGS

When a pharmacy services a LTC facility, the facility is reliant on the pharmacy to handle all of its medication supply needs. One of the biggest direct costs pharmacies incur when servicing a long-term care facility are the courier STAT delivery fees. However, with the secure and controlled storage MedDispense provides, these fees are greatly reduced because more medications are readily available. Scott Soulek, RPh, Owner/Clinical Services Manager at Emissary Pharmacy located in Wyoming, decided to install MedDispense units at four LTC facilities as backup storage for emergency boxes (e-boxes). “MedDispense saves us money because we were delivering at least once or twice a day from the backup pharmacy to the LTC facility,” said Soulek. “We still do daily deliveries, but our backup drug cost has

gone down.” By using Metro MedDispense in the four LTC facilities that Emissary services, the pharmacy estimates an annual savings of approximately \$36,000 over five years.

The operations manager for a national institutional pharmacy provider servicing several LTC facilities in and around the Atlanta, Georgia area has seen a huge savings in courier STAT delivery fees by using MedDispense. “We made a huge push to install MedDispense units in facilities with high acuity levels constantly needing STAT deliveries,” he said. “These units have helped reduced our STAT delivery cost by 50%. We were spending about \$65,000 a month and now only about \$35,000. This can be attributed to the immediate availability of medications and the ability to keep more in stock. MedDispense pays for itself over time with reduced STAT delivery fees and fewer travel expenses.”

EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to direct savings, efficiency is improved for the pharmacy and LTC facility

Immediate access:

MedDispense provides immediate access to medications, thus improving and expediting drug administration procedures for LTC facilities. “The two features Emissary noticed right away were immediate access for nurses to get meds and ease-of-use,” said Soulek. “Nurses can go to the unit and get first and second doses if the medication hasn’t been delivered yet. As a result, our customer satisfaction has risen.”

With the big push for availability of medications, MedDispense is the right solution because more drugs and narcotics can be kept at the



LTC facility. In fact, the most significant change the operations manager noticed was patients receiving the necessary drugs at a quicker rate. Additionally, the unit can hold upward of 350 medications compared to the 48 an e-box can hold. “The ability to have more meds available right away was the best and biggest thing I initially noticed with MedDispense,” commented Soulek.

The operations manager used to receive a lot of complaints about med availability. However, since using MedDispense, he hasn’t heard any. “Recently, a facility administrator told me, ‘Ever since you put MedDispense in my building, I haven’t had any complaints about drug availability.’ This was a huge compliment for us and for the facility’s nursing home staff.”

Durability:

Durability of a unit like MedDispense is critical because failure would be detrimental to the LTC facility’s med administration. MedDispense is

engineered and manufactured to be the most durable and reliable product of its kind on the market

Pharmacies and LTC facilities can trust it will remain functional at all times. "The equipment (MedDispense) is very durable and not as expensive as its competitors," remarked the operations manager. "The durability, reliability and availability MedDispense offers is very important, so we don't have to deliver STAT medications from the pharmacy."

DEA COMPLIANCE MEASURES

When it comes to controlled medications, many of the new mandates focus on compliance. If a facility does not comply, it can face significant penalties or fines. With MedDispense, facilities are able to have these medications in-house because of its security and controlled inventory features, such as the remote authorization add-on

Remote authorization:

The DEA requires all pharmacies servicing LTC facilities to have a hard copy of a narcotic prescription from the physician before the drug can be removed from any e-box or automated dispensing unit and given to a patient. In particular, the operations manager had an issue with nurses not contacting the pharmacists to get authorization before administering the drug. As a result, it was found non-compliant by the DEA and penalized with a large fine.

To guarantee DEA compliance, a remote authorization add-on is available for MedDispense. The unit will remain locked until the pharmacist gives authorization, which is done remotely. This forces nurses to fax a copy of the prescription and call the pharmacy for approval of the specific quantity of medication. Once the pharmacist gives remote authorization, the nurse only has one-two hours to retrieve the drug. If it is not removed in that time frame, the section of the unit containing the drug becomes

locked again. "Now that we use the remote authorization add-on, our pharmacists have more peace of mind procedures are carried out correctly, and non-compliance is no longer a worry," said the operations manager. "Having these units is a win for the facility and a win for the pharmacy."

MedDispense has also improved Emissary's e-box solution because medications are now much more controlled and processes are documented. "We relied on the nurses faxing us and documenting the prescriptions," stated Soulek. "We would have to reconcile an e-box every month because prescriptions wouldn't be documented. This gets expensive and puts us at high risk for a DEA fine. Now, our inventory maintenance is more streamlined and organized."

IN SUMMARY

As a decision maker for a pharmacy servicing LTC facilities, it's important to purchase products that offer a positive user experience, are easy to learn and use and streamline everyday procedures for increased patient satisfaction. An automated dispensing system like Metro MedDispense provides all this and more. Over 35 institutional pharmacies use MedDispense in LTC facilities and have seen the difference a unit like this makes. Additionally, with a high return on investment because of direct savings, efficiency improvements and DEA compliance measures, an automated dispensing system can help put your pharmacy ahead of the rest.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT CALCULATION

AVERAGE ANNUAL COST OF:

Courier fees:	\$ _____
+ STAT deliveries	\$ _____
+ DEA fines or penalties:	\$ _____
Total annual cost:	\$ _____
x 5 years =	\$ _____

Please contact your TouchPoint Medical representative to discuss your pharmacy needs, and learn how you will receive a return on your investment with MedDispense.

