

Case Study



Aultman Achieves 70 Percent Drop in Medication Stock Outs While Enhancing Patient Care

At a Glance

Aultman Hospital
Canton, Ohio

Solution Spotlight

- AcuDose-Rx®
- Fulfill-Rxsm
- MedCarousel®
- NarcStation™
- PACMED™
- ROBOT-RX™

Results

- 70% reduction in medication stock outs
- Projected \$30,000 savings in associated pharmacy technician labor
- 20% decrease in cabinet restocking labor
- Streamlined medication administration workflow for nurses

Overview

Aultman Hospital has achieved a significant reduction in stock outs, lower labor costs, and a more streamlined medication distribution model with McKesson automation solutions.

Challenge

Aultman Hospital, a 682-bed acute care and teaching hospital, consistently garners national recognition for achieving the highest standards of patient care. Aultman is a Thomson Reuters Top 100 Hospital, an American Nursing Association-designated Magnet® hospital, and ranks in the 99th percentile for patient satisfaction in Press Ganey.

Aultman’s pharmacy is similarly acclaimed, with a history of high performance powered by the most advanced technology. Pharmacy operations, which serve the main hospital in addition to two remote surgical centers, a pain management center and a skilled nursing facility, are integral to the overall effort to deliver the best patient care possible. The medication distribution model is built on a closed-loop system that begins with computerized physician order entry and concludes with bar-code scanning of medications at the bedside.

At its heart is a hybrid medication distribution system that includes McKesson’s automated PACMED™ oral solids packager, ROBOT-Rx® dispensing system, and MedCarousel® system combining to fill more than 10,000 daily patient doses.

Narcotics, PRNs and stat medications are stored in 78 McKesson AcuDose-Rx® cabinets located on nursing units, procedural areas and in remote facilities.

According to James Toohey, director of pharmacy, a drive to further enhance patient safety, reduce labor costs and achieve operational efficiencies led to a focus of optimizing cabinet-level medication inventory. Specifically, Toohey sought to reduce medication stock outs and lower associated labor costs while maintaining sufficient inventory to ensure high levels of service.

Solution

To achieve its goals, Aultman took advantage of the RightStock™ dynamic restocking features for the AcuDose-Rx automated dispensing cabinets. RightStock uses each cabinet’s historical usage data to monitor and re-order items automatically once they dip below par, providing tighter control over inventory management and helping to ensure that the right medications are available when and where they are needed.

RightStock can be turned on or off for each stored item. Aultman uses the feature to manage approximately 40 percent of its 10,000 cabinet storage locations—including faster-moving narcotics, PRNs, and stat medications. Toohey and his staff have the ability to dynamically adjust inventory levels at the pocket level and automate reordering.

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“Our goal is to meet the needs of patients and the nursing staff while touching the cabinets once a day or less. Features like RightStock help us manage inventory at the cabinet level so we can minimize our presence on the nursing units while still doing our jobs as effectively as possible. When we can optimize cabinet inventory, we’re not intruding on patients or nursing staff.”

James Toohey
Director of Pharmacy
Aultman Hospital

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“To optimize cabinet inventory, most pharmacies have to run manual reports and make adjustments during ordering,” Toohey says. “Now, RightStock does it for me automatically. I set the values in the system and let it run. I check the system every now and then just to verify my original assumptions or make mid-course adjustments.”

Toohey also uses dynamic restocking to automatically manage narcotics stored in the AcuDose-Rx cabinets, since the added paperwork and regulatory requirements for narcotics make stock outs twice as costly to resolve. Enhanced integration with McKesson Health System distribution centers through Fulfill-Rxsm software also streamlines the reordering process, further helping to drive down costs.

“When inventory for a given medication drops below the threshold set by us, the system automatically generates a purchase order along with a DEA Form 222 if the medication is a Schedule II drug,” Toohey says. “We scan the bar-coded replenishment tote when it arrives and the contents are automatically entered into inventory. NarcStation gathers information from the database and our technicians pull the order for delivery to the cabinet, where it’s scanned as it goes into the pocket, automatically updating the inventory.”

Results

Using the RightStock feature on AcuDose-Rx cabinets has led to a 70 percent reduction in medication stock outs. “One of our primary goals was minimizing stock outs,”

Toohey points out. “RightStock gives us much greater ability to manage individual cabinet inventory more efficiently, so the right medications are available when and where they’re needed.” By his estimates, the reduced stock out rate also will save nearly \$30,000 per year in pharmacy technician labor alone by eliminating “stat” runs to the nursing floor.

Toohey is seeing savings in other key areas as well. For example, RightStock reduces the number and instances of expired medications, and shrinks by 20 percent the amount of restocking time pharmacy technicians spend at each cabinet. Further, the pharmacy now conducts its daily order pulling and cabinet restocking activity between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m., freeing the smaller evening shift for other activities.

Time and manpower savings also extend to the nursing staff, which is submitting fewer refill requests because of better inventory management. Nurses are pulling medication orders faster and with fewer touches, he adds, as a result of the new AcuDose-Rx user interface.

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