

Case Study



Eisenhower Reduces Risk, Improves Compliance with Pharmacy Automation

At a Glance

Eisenhower Medical Center
Rancho Mirage, California

Solution Spotlight

- AcuDose-Rx®
- Fulfill-RxSM
- Horizon Admin-Rx™
- Horizon Expert Orders™
- Horizon Meds Manager™
- McKesson Health Systems Pharmacy Distribution
- MedCarousel®
- NarcStation™
- ROBOT-Rx®

Results

- Achieved 95%+ bar code scan rate for pharmacy-dispensed medications
- Lowered picking errors to near zero
- Accommodated 70% patient census fluctuations
- Improved regulatory compliance efforts
- Reduced pharmacy labor and freed pharmacists for new assignments
- Improved inventory management and reduced associated costs
- Enabled and supported best practices that enhance service levels and increase staff satisfaction
- Improved the pharmacy's overall service quality control and enhanced patient safety

Overview

McKesson automated pharmacy solutions have helped Eisenhower Medical Center meet cost reduction, regulatory compliance and service objectives, but also contributed to critical improvements in patient care and safety standards.

The Challenge

World-renowned Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, California comprises a 540-bed hospital, the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences, the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center and the Betty Ford Center. Patient needs are served by 25 staff pharmacists and managers, assisted by 23 pharmacy technicians, working from a compact, 2,000 square feet central pharmacy.

Eisenhower enjoys widespread recognition thanks to the political, entertainment and other luminaries who seek treatment there. Despite its high profile, however, Eisenhower faces many of the same challenges as other hospitals, said Lyle Matthews, Pharm.D., MAM, Eisenhower's director of pharmacy services.

"Our objective is to be invisible, because that means that every patient receives the right medication at the right time, for the right reason," he said. "Whether the patient is a local resident or a former president, the goal is the same: do everything possible to ensure patient safety."

Also like other medical centers, Eisenhower must cope with an increasingly time- and resource-consuming regulatory environment, and work relentlessly to reduce costs without compromising the

quality or safety of care. "The regulatory requirements are such that we actually have as many or more pharmacists attending to regulatory issues as we have servicing patients," Matthews noted.

In 2002, Eisenhower's management committed to automating pharmacy operations from end to end. "Our CEO envisions Eisenhower competing with the best medical centers in the state," Matthews recalls. "He understands the benefits of automating pharmacy operations, and he was committed to being the first in the state to employ bedside bar-code scanning."

Answers

Following extensive evaluation of medication distribution systems, Eisenhower selected a hybrid dispensing model using McKesson's automated solutions to achieve its patient safety goals.

In the pharmacy, pharmacists receive orders sent by the Horizon Expert Orders computerized physician order system, augmented by the Horizon MedComm-Rx order imaging system, and integrated with the Horizon Meds Manager pharmacy information system.

The ROBOT-Rx automates dispensing of approximately 1,900 daily doses for first dose and 24-hour cart fill operations.

The MedCarousel system is used primarily for cabinet restocking and inventory optimization. Cabinets are restocked twice daily, with a main morning fill and a late afternoon "catch-up" fill, said Matthews.

"Our MedCarousel has become the quarterback of our medication dispensing processes."

Lyle Matthews, Pharm.D., MAM
Director, Pharmacy Services
Eisenhower Medical Center

Between ROBOT-Rx and MedCarousel, more than 95 percent of medications dispensed are bar-code scanned for accuracy before leaving pharmacy. This puts Eisenhower among the top 25 percent in the country, according to research by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

Fulfill-Rx software communicates with McKesson's distribution centers to automate the daily medication replenishment order, ensure GPO compliance and reduce drug spend.

Serving nursing units and operating rooms, AcuDose-Rx automated medication dispensing cabinets, augmented by NarcStation software for controlled substance management, are stocked with narcotics and PRN medications. Completing the closed-loop process, nurses use the Horizon Admin-Rx system for bar-code medication administration.

The Results

"Our MedCarousel has become the quarterback of our medication dispensing processes," Matthews explained.

"MedCarousel stores our bulk items and many of our injectables, which has improved our inventory and picking accuracy. We also have much better control over quality issues such as expiration dates.

"Automation also gives me a powerful cost-control tool," he continued. "For example, instead of manually counting everything once a year, a mouse click gives me an accurate inventory accounting whenever I need it. That's important for working with administration and senior management on controlling and reducing inventory costs."

In addition to cost containment, automation enabled Matthews to re-engineer other critical pharmacy processes. Today, look-alike/sound-alike and high-risk medications are stored in different areas of the MedCarousel to help eliminate potential dispensing errors. Also, the MedCarousel segregates adult and pediatric crash carts kits for both safety and efficiency purposes.

With pharmacy automation Eisenhower is better positioned for future growth and also better equipped to accommodate the ebb and flow of seasonal census demands. Explained Matthews, "During the course of the year, our census can double in size—from a low of 150 patients to 300 or more during peak tourist season. Our pharmacy team would be hard pressed to support peak demands without our automation systems."

Most important of all, standardizing on McKesson's automation solutions helped reduce medication errors to near zero by adding a layer of quality control and safety throughout the dispensing process. "Of course, it helps us meet and exceed compliance requirements," Matthews said. "When state surveyors inspect our pharmacy, we can now tell a very compelling story about the steps we're taking to enhance safety. They're very impressed with the processes we created with the help of MedCarousel and our other automation systems.

"In the end, it's not about speed and efficiency. It's about safety, first and foremost," he continued. "The workflow changes we've implemented enable our technicians to be more efficient. But adding bar code verification to the process gives them and the pharmacists checking orders an additional level of confidence because the order has been technologically verified. They're much more confident that what we're dispensing is accurate and safe—as safe as modern technology allows."

That confidence extends to the nursing staff as well, Matthews reports. "In particular, our nursing staff has enthusiastically bought into bedside scanning," he says. "Bedside bar code scanning doesn't necessarily make the process any faster. But I've received some powerful feedback from our nurses. They tell me they sleep a lot better at night knowing these processes help ensure patients are getting the correct medications and doses."

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