

+ CATHOLIC HEALTH
INITIATIVES

Franciscan Health System

St. Joseph Medical Center
St. Francis Hospital · St. Clare Hospital
Enumclaw Regional Hospital
St. Anthony Hospital
Franciscan Medical Group

Challenge

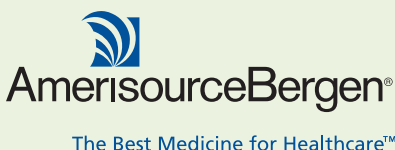
AmerisourceBergen and Franciscan Health System (FHS) partnered to pilot a pharmaceutical supply chain model that would optimize their pharmacy inventory management throughout the hospital system, streamline cabinet replenishment and ensure BCMA readiness.

Solution

Utilizing AmerisourceBergen's RxWorks Suite technology solutions, including dispensing hardware and inventory management software, Franciscan was one of the first hospitals to implement a centralized pharmaceutical fill system, where one hospital receives and processes medication and manages inventory for the entire health system.

Result

This hub-and-spoke fill model increases dispensing and administration safety, decreases inventory costs and allows key pharmacy staff to be "on the floor" in the hospitals, focusing their efforts on important clinical and patient responsibilities. The health system is also closer to fulfilling its goal of bedside, bar-coded medication administration. Tim Lynch, PharmD, MSM, Regional Director, FHS Pharmaceutical Services, sees the hub-and-spoke model as the pharmacy distribution system of choice in the future for multi-hospital health systems.



Franciscan Health System revolutionizes pharmacy operations with RxWorks Suite® Technology Solutions

The RxWorks Suite technology infrastructure from AmerisourceBergen® helps decrease medication costs, improve operational efficiency and increase medication safety.

Franciscan Health System (FHS), based in Tacoma, Wash., is comprised of five hospitals with more than 650 beds. The system includes St. Clare Hospital, Lakewood, Wash.; St. Francis Hospital, Federal Way, Wash.; Enumclaw Regional Hospital, Enumclaw, Wash.; St. Anthony Hospital, Gig Harbor, Wash.; and its flagship facility, St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma.

FHS is widely recognized as a leader in creating best practices for patient care and has received numerous awards in recognition for its efforts, including Consumer Choice awards for overall quality and image for St. Joseph Medical Center for 10 consecutive years and the 2007 Washington State Quality Award for Performance Excellence. In addition, the health system has been ranked as one of the best-performing, most-efficient health systems in the nation for seven consecutive years, according to the research and analytics company SDI.

Challenge

Even though AmerisourceBergen had been Franciscan's pharmaceutical supply chain partner for many years, they challenged AmerisourceBergen and their competition to revamp their inventory management system and barcode readiness through a formal bid process. AmerisourceBergen was chosen over the competitors because of their long-term commitment and vision to improve the hospital's overall inventory management structure.

"We recognized that automation was the future of pharmaceutical distribution, and we wanted to be involved in laying the groundwork for the industry," says Tim.

Solution

The plan called for a total restructuring of Franciscan's pharmaceutical supply chain process. The existing decentralized fill system, where each hospital received and processed its own medications, was replaced with a centralized fill "hub and spoke" model where one location served the entire health system. St. Joseph, the largest hospital in the system, was designated as the "hub," with all the other hospitals acting as "spokes."

In order to launch the new model, Franciscan implemented AmerisourceBergen's RxWorks Suite solution, which includes:

- The FastPak® EXP compliance packager with ClinicWorks pharmacy workflow software
- SupplyWorks Carousel automated storage and retrieval system
- SupplyWorks inventory management software
- Barcoding stations

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**– Tim Lynch,
PharmD, MSM, Regional Director,
FHS Pharmaceutical Services**

For more information about these
and other Cost Control Solutions,
contact AmerisourceBergen at 877-892-1254,
email solutions@amerisourcebergen.com, or visit our
new website at www.amerisourcebergendrug.com.

RxWorks Suite packaged these technologies to streamline the hospital pharmacy medication supply chain process, while ensuring the new automation system would integrate with existing pharmacy hardware.

The Result

“Being one of the first hospitals to implement automation, we did encounter some bumps along the way,” admits Lynch. “We were met with some initial resistance, but we stuck to our vision and worked through the challenges. Now, everyone at Franciscan would agree that the struggles were well worth the payoff. I firmly believe that the hub-and-spoke model is the pharmacy system of the future.”

With the health system’s fill process now more than 95% centralized, FHS has a markedly safer and more efficient pharmaceutical supply chain process. The new SupplyWorks Carousel and retrieval system has made locating medications easier and more efficient, and reduced the physical space each hospital needs for medication storage.

The medication replacement stock for more than 100 automated dispensing machines for the entire health system are pulled by just a few pharmacy technicians – a job that previously took 2-3 hours a day and involved many members of the pharmacy staff at each hospital. All five hospitals are benefiting from time savings as a result of reduced labor hours dedicated to pulling medications for stocking automated cabinets. Technicians spend minimal time pulling medications at 4 out of the 5 hospitals since they are pulled and delivered from the main campus. Technicians are now able to be more involved in the day-to-day activities within the pharmacy thereby giving the pharmacists the freedom to focus on direct patient care. As Lynch points out, “Pharmacists are the most expensive component of a pharmacy’s labor force, so maximizing their impact just makes sense.”

Additionally, the automated system has vastly improved inventory management. Lynch estimates that in the short time the centralized model has been in effect at Franciscan, the health system has saved \$25,000 in medication inventory costs, a figure he estimates will increase to more than \$150,000.

In addition to the time and cost savings gained from the centralized fill process, Franciscan has increased medication safety. Medication labels are now uniform, streamlined, and easy to read, which reduces the risk of medication errors. Every medication is now distributed with a unique barcode. Medication doses are scanned for accuracy when loading the automated dispensing machines. It also prepares the system for implementation of bedside barcode verification in the future.

FHS is still striving for additional solutions to improve patient care in its hospitals. “Our number one priority is providing the best care possible,” says Lynch. “Achieving that goal means that we will continue to explore opportunities that enable us to work smarter and more efficiently.”

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