

Pharmacy debuts life-saving technology

By Dennis Hernet

Herald Times Reporter

TWO RIVERS - Technicians no longer count pills at the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy.

But that can also be said of other pharmacies, including several in the Lakeshore area.



ScriptPro's SP 200® dispenses medication directly from the cell into a vial therefore avoiding cross-contamination.

However, the Medicine Shoppe has taken its operation a step up to battle the seventh leading cause of death in America...errors in medication.

"It's a serious problem and it's preventable," said Brian Jensen, pharmacist, owner and operator of the Medicine Shoppe, 1500 Washington St., reflecting on national statistics.

Jensen has installed a ScriptPro SP 200 prescription dispensing system at his downtown location. The unit is designed to eliminate these errors. Jensen's pharmacy is the first in Wisconsin to have such a unit.

Simplistically, an intake technician checks the patient's prescription and passes any new information on to a data entry technician who inputs the data into the computer system.

This data is routed to a printer and the ScriptPro unit.

The ScriptPro can hold 200 tablet medications, which represent about 70 percent of the medications dispensed each day, according to Jensen.

The machine makes a positive identification of the medication requested through the use of bar codes, does the pill count, applies the label, and presents the medication to a verifying technician who substantiates that the correct medication has been dispensed.

"It's impossible to give a wrong drug," Jensen said, detailing the use of checks, balances, and computer verification in the process.

The completed prescription is passed to the pharmacist who verifies it again, this time against the patient's record, then talks with the patient when presenting the medication ordered.

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"This allows us to increase our patient focus," Jensen said. "This medication safety system won't let us move to the next step if anything is wrong."

Jensen, who is president of the Pharmacists of Wisconsin

Association, said the acquisition of the system is part of the vision he has for the pharmacy profession.

Using his position with the state association to talk with other leaders in the industry, Jensen said the leader of the National Association of Pharmacists told him simply having the system has allowed him to increase the capacity of his personal business while maintaining safety.

That growth, Jensen said, is vitally necessary since the number of prescriptions expected to be handled in the next five years, because of an aging population, will triple. The number of pharmacists is expected to increase by only six percent.

"Automation is the key to maintaining service without compromising safety," Jensen said. "Initially, this has allowed me to redeploy personnel so they are used more efficiently."

"Instead of counting to 100 by fives, they are managing the dispensing process so I don't have to do it," Jensen said, noting his time can now be better spent on patient services.

"I'm still the end of the line, the final check. I know when that product gets to me, it is right," he said.

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