

Press Release --For Immediate Release

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Contact at ScriptPro: Leslie Russo Bayer 913.403.5425

lbayer@scriptpro.com · www.scriptpro.com

Contact at University of Kansas Hospital Department of Pharmacy: Bob Hallinan 913.588.5246

Award Winning Telepharmacy Brings Safety to Chemotherapy Prep Room

MISSION, KS – The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) bestowed a Best Practices Award in Health-System Pharmacy to Brian O'Neal, M.S., Pharm.D., John Worden, M.S., Pharm.D., Rick Couldry, M.S., R.Ph., University of Kansas Hospital for *Innovations in Chemotherapy Preparation Safety: Use of Telepharmacy and Barcode Technology in the IV Admixture Area*. The honor was presented Dec. 2, 2007 at the Opening General Session of the ASHP 42nd Midyear Clinical Meeting in Las Vegas.

The technology used by the University of Kansas Hospital to improve safety in one of the highest risk practices in hospital pharmacies is ScriptPro's Telepharmacy for Sterile Room Med Preparation.

Before implementing ScriptPro's Telepharmacy for Sterile Room Med Preparation, oversight at University of Kansas Hospital and other hospitals typically involved verifying the chemotherapy preparations via the "syringe pullback method." In the isolated chemotherapy preparation room, a technician fills the syringe with medication and injects it into the IV bag. After the fact, the technician pulls back the empty syringe to show the pharmacist how much medication was injected.

"There had to be a lot of trust between the pharmacist and technician that the syringe was pulled back accurately," said Brian O'Neal, MS, Pharm.D. and Assistant Pharmacy Director at the Hospital. "There just shouldn't be assumptions in chemotherapy preparation."

O'Neal was familiar with ScriptPro's Telepharmacy. He needed a system designed to optimize the use of pharmacists by allowing remote verification of prescription dispensing. So he called ScriptPro to see if Telepharmacy could allow pharmacists to verify activities taking place in the chemotherapy preparation room from the outside. This would eliminate the time-consuming process of scrubbing up to enter the isolated area. ScriptPro and O'Neal worked together to design and implement the first chemotherapy preparation room supported by Telepharmacy. Additionally, the system enabled barcode verification to ensure the correct medication had been selected.

The objective of the program, said O'Neal, was to find a way to improve safety by increasing the presence of the pharmacist at critical risk points during the preparation process, while making the most efficient use of the limited availability of clinical pharmacists.

"We wanted to minimize assumptions when verifying chemotherapy medications," said O'Neal. "We selected ScriptPro's Telepharmacy, and now our program is providing the assurances we want."

According to O'Neal, the system improves safety as follows:

1. A technician scans the barcode on the chemotherapy drug vial. A computer match to the patient record ensures that the correct formulation has been selected.
2. In the preparation room, the technician captures an electronic image of the vial label and the filled syringe just prior to injecting the medication into the patient's IV bag.
3. Before completing the preparation, the technician presses a button on the ScriptPro Telepharmacy screen to request pharmacist verification.
4. A clinical pharmacist, working outside the preparation room, reviews the images of the drug vial, the pullback on the syringe containing the medication, the IV bag, and the patient's medication order. Confirmation of the review steps and related images are archived as part of the electronic record and are available for future reference.
5. There is no need for either party to go through the procedures of entering or exiting the isolation room.

ScriptPro Telepharmacy for Sterile Room Med Preparation includes a database to positively identify drugs using barcode scanning and electronic file images, digital optics to record the process steps, and a webcam/microphone system to allow the users to interact and converse.

According to O'Neal, the system has improved the safety of the process in several areas. Positive matching to the patient's medication order decreases the risk of using the wrong drug. Pharmacists review digital images of the critical process steps, including the volume of medication injected into the IV bag. Also, small vial labels can be enlarged on the screen for easier reading, and pharmacists are not exposed to powerful drug agents each time they verify a chemotherapy preparation.

ABOUT SCRIPTPRO: ScriptPro develops, provides and supports state-of-the-art, robotics-based management and workflow systems for pharmacies. ScriptPro is dedicated to helping pharmacies lower operating costs, reduce dispensing errors and maximize customer satisfaction. ScriptPro technology helps pharmacies operate their businesses efficiently and profitably so they can deliver the maximum contribution to the healthcare system.

ScriptPro, located in Mission, Kansas, has automated thousands of pharmacies worldwide.

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