

Commercial Products Hospitals Need Now

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Pharmacy practice is changing, it evolves continuously and a lot of that change forces standard requirements, whether it be our local colleges or Accreditation Canada or other entities where we look to guide our practice. And we would like to work with the vendor community to help support these changes.

When a pharmacy department issues those drugs out to a nursing unit, those medications often are in a bulk bottle, they're in a control pack, they're in a bulk liquid bottle, they're in an ampoule, they're in a vial.

None of these formats are the format that gets issued to the patient. The control pack is popped out and a nurse might walk the pill to a bedside, therefore having no name of medication, no lot and expiry of that medication, and nothing to barcode.

Any ampoules and vials will need to be drawn up into a syringe. Any liquid medication needs to be measured to the dose and taken to the bedside. So, you can see we have a huge gap in terms of what we receive from a manufacturer and what is required by the patient and for the nurse to administer safely and accurately, and with all the tracking and paperwork we require.

Our various hospitals operate under a number of distribution models. Here in Vancouver, we operate under a centralized production model where we try to leverage our equipment and our expertise into a centralized place and distribute out to our hospitals. This still pales in comparison to what can be achieved in a manufacturing site.

When we receive product that is not in the specific dose, that is regularly prescribed by the physician, we can run into an awful lot of problems. Because of our legislation, we have to now take those out of the package in a very controlled environment, such as our biological safety cabinet, we have to then split the tablet and repackage it so that we ensure protection for our nurses when they're administering this drug.

In addition to the manual process being quite labor intensive, there's also the part of gowning, PPE, and potential for contamination if this is not done correctly. Having unit dose especially for our hazardous products in the doses that are frequently prescribed is a significant assistance.

That obviously adds to safety, it reduces waste within the system. So that allows pharmacy to invest our resources in direct patient care rather than in preparation and production.

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