

**McKnight's** Business Solutions On

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**PARTNERS APS** ADVANCED PHARMACY SOLUTIONS

APS units reduce drug waste, save nursing hours and lower readmission rates.

Customers like River Garden already depended on Partners' proprietary Passport technology, which prepares oral solid medications into multi-dose packages sorted by med-pass time and patient name to simplify the process for patients, clinical staff and the billing office.

The next generation of Passport takes that efficiency to the next level.

Introduced in August, Partners' Advanced Pharmacy Solutions, or APS, is an integrated multi-dose dispensing system made especially for long-term care. Four units combine in an easy-to-use solution ideal for today's time-strapped nursing staff.

The main unit, the APS 250, can store up to 250 different solid, oral medications in multi-dose packages — 95% of those needed by a typical skilled nursing facility. The smaller APS Mini holds 30 of the most commonly used PRN medications and can be placed in locations throughout the facility. The APS Vault adds the ability to securely store over 100 bulk or refrigerated items such as inhalers, IV fluids or TPN solutions.

The final component, the APS Mobile, is a customized

# Unrivaled pharmacy tech that improves care and reduces costs

Partners Pharmacy's Advance Pharmacy Solutions (APS) saves time, enhances care and reduces waste. The future of LTC pharmacy is here

**A**fter more than 70 years caring for seniors, the River Garden Hebrew Home for the Aged had outgrown its onsite pharmacy.

The Florida nursing home was treating more short-stay patients who might arrive after hours or on the weekend, and operators needed a partner that would reliably deliver prescription medications and bulk supplies without running up costs.

Chief Executive Officer Martin A. Goetz turned to Partners Pharmacy, a leading long-term care pharmacy whose innovative dispensing technology and emphasis on customer service sealed the deal.

"For me to give up River Garden's pharmacy — something

I took immense pride in — it was painful," said Goetz, whose father and grandfather were both pharmacists. "Being able to replace it with a partner who also brought us pharmacy technology to do our job better made it all worthwhile."

Partners launched in 1998 and now serves about 50,000 post-acute residents in 17 states.

medication cart designed to securely hold the APS medication totes and an electronic tablet that interfaces with the APS ecosystem for easy access to reports and ordering PRN medications for packaging.

APS' new software combines the reliability of Passport's software with a totally redesigned user interface and experience. The new software is enhanced for ease of use, ability to interact with electronic health records and advanced analytics. APS also recognizes the great pressure providers face to provide the highest of outcomes on what are often the lowest of budgets.

"They need an infrastructure that helps them discharge patients in a shorter amount of time and in a safe way," said Partners Chief Operating Officer Anthony Spero. "We want to help them get as much time at the bedside as possible and leverage technology as much as they can."

### Real-time answer

The APS development team spent 18 months interviewing nurses, administrators and skilled nursing owners to find out what they wanted in a new medication management solution. The common theme, Spero said, was having access to medi-

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— *Martin A. Goetz,*

*River Garden Hebrew Home for the Aged*

cations in real time.

If a nurse needs a PRN medication, such as a narcotic, needed for pain, it can be accessed onsite within a minute from the APS Mini.

With astonishing speed, the APS system creates a patient-specific envelope, drops the pill into it via a vacuum-powered probe, seals it and delivers it to the nurse vending-machine style, all while updating the pharmacy electronic record.

In all, APS can store and manage more than 400 medications in a single facility.

All medications are delivered and stocked by Partners professionals, who can act immediately on updates to prescriptions, canceled orders or anticipated admissions requiring new drugs.

Medications that are no longer needed can be returned to Partners, which maintains control of the devices and the stocked medications. Providers are billed at month's end only for medications that are dispensed.

"It's like taking the phar-

macy and putting it into the facility," Spero said.

### Quicker, more organized

River Garden has used the Passport system for a year, with two units, one on each floor. Before each shift, medications for each patient are packaged and arranged in medication totes and assigned to specific nurses to use on the next med pass.

"My staff love it," Goetz said. "It has certainly shortened med pass times, and it's made for a much cleaner and more organized med pass."

Spero said customer time studies found switching to APS from a standard med pass process can save the average skilled nursing facility 295 hours per month, assuming residents have an average of eight to 10 medications each.

Goetz appreciates administrative savings too. APS dispenses when needed, which means less loss if a resident stops or switches medications mid-month.

When new residents are admitted, the staff physician can review the Partners system in real time to see what drugs are already stocked in the Passport system. That helps keep formulary in check and prevents delays that could impact those residents. APS delivers providers, on average, a 2% reduction in hospital readmissions by eliminating delays and ensuring medication availability, Spero said.

Partners pharmacists review the medication formulary regularly, helping facilities reevaluate the medications that make the most sense to keep on hand.

In addition to round-the-clock monitoring, the APS system is layered with new technologies, from biometric security fingerprint access to a faster, four-step process for drug access.

Goetz's favorite feature, though, remains customer support.

"There's a professional available to us 24/7, whenever we have an order that is unclear or when we need to change anything at all," he said. "They are very customer-oriented. If you put your client first, you are also putting the resident first." ■

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