

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

Business Member Spotlight: Chartwell Midwest Wisconsin

by Connor T. Hanson, 2019 PharmD Candidate, Andrew H. Vandermause, 2019 PharmD Candidate, and Collin J. Dean, 2019 PharmD Candidate

Over the past 23 years, Chartwell Midwest Wisconsin has served as a leader in home infusion therapy in Wisconsin and beyond. Providing products for both infusion and enteral use, the aim of the pharmacy is to provide complex patients with intravenous/injectable pharmaceutical therapy and enteral nutrition therapy in the comfort of their own home. The company opened with humble beginnings in 1994 with twelve employees. It has flourished into a 77-member operation, including 20 employees working directly in pharmacy and enteral therapy and the remaining in a variety of support roles (delivery drivers, nurses, billing and insurance specialists, supply coordinators). The company has developed a vast geographical network of service across Wisconsin, northeast Iowa, eastern Minnesota, and northern Illinois. Susan Kleppin, Director of Clinical Services at Chartwell, states that the company "...has a niche in health care to reduce expenditures while providing quality care at home." This shared vision is a pillar of the company, as evidenced by a staff that has retained three of its founding employees. A majority of the eight pharmacists working at Chartwell have served these patients for over ten years.

Day to Day Practice

Despite being nestled in a quiet business park in Middleton, the daily processes at play and services provided by Chartwell are anything but mundane. "There is no typical day," states Susan Kleppin, and with a typical census of 300 infusion patients and 425 enteral patients, it's easy to see why. The pharmacy department typically prepares upwards of 100 intravenous prescriptions daily, and

most patients receive their medications in weekly supplies. An interdisciplinary team keeps operations running smoothly in order to maintain this output and a high level of service across all facets of the company. Most patients being initiated on home intravenous therapy or enteral nutrition with Chartwell start via referral upon discharge from hospitals and are then processed through insurance and reimbursement verification. Each infusion patient is assigned to a multi-disciplinary care team consisting of an office-based nurse, a pharmacist, and a patient supply coordinator. After insurance verification is complete, medication preparation can begin at the appropriate time and then be packaged for delivery to the patient. Before intravenous medication delivery, the patient will receive a call from a Chartwell nurse and pharmacist who collaborate to provide a complete and extensive medication counseling. This medication counseling is crucial to the patient or caregiver's understanding; having both professions involved contributes to a clear comprehension. The Chartwell nurse also coordinates care with a home health nursing agency that may be providing care to the patient at home. As a service to the patient, the first delivery is made by one of the company's six drivers, who can direct patients' further questions to the proper staff member. The delivery includes a full set of medication instructions, as well as teaching sheets explaining drug delivery including how to operate the various infusion pumps provided by the company. These services provided by a complete team of caregivers allows for the comprehensive level of care Chartwell provides in a home setting. The level of care provided is in compliance with the accreditation standards from The Joint Commission, the

accrediting body that Chartwell engages to evaluate their services.

Enteral nutrition patients are also managed by a multidisciplinary team that includes a dietician. Enteral formula and medical supplies are shipped to patients directly from a distributor with all order processing and patient contact being made by Chartwell by enteral team members.

Chartwell also presents unique opportunities to students on rotation during their 4th year clerkships. Students on rotation spend time with pharmacists consulting new and existing patients, eventually gaining enough experience to conduct the consultations on their own. Obtaining this infusion consulting knowledge is quite different than teachings from many traditional rotation sites. Several students on rotation have gone on to become full-time employees at Chartwell following graduation, and they are always looking for students interested in the home infusion field.

Raising the Bar

Chartwell has made innovative strides on the state level, but the company is also making waves nationally. In a concerted effort to provide the best patient care available, Chartwell became one of the first home infusion pharmacies nationally to implement a standard way of reporting patient clinical outcomes developed by the National Home Infusion Association (NHIA). As a result, Chartwell was recognized nationally through the NHIA bimonthly journal in the July/August 2016 issue. The implementation of these standard outcomes definitions will allow for accurate and genuine benchmarking between home infusion practices, something that Chartwell is very excited about. These data offer an accurate reflection of the



Above: Chartwell Midwest Wisconsin

value of home infusion services within the continuum of care and are important to the company, insurers, and UW Health. Furthermore, the company also modified their patient satisfaction survey to match standard questions developed by NHIA that Chartwell hopes will allow for further benchmarking. All of the data collected on patient clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction is analyzed to identify areas for improvement. Chartwell has a robust performance improvement program and the sharing of data and development of action plans to address issues identified assures the provision of quality care to patients.

Chartwell implemented an IV workflow management system in the past year, which represents an advancement in patient safety. The system supports barcode identification of the ingredients in a compounded preparation and utilizes photos of the various steps of the compounding process to assist the pharmacist in final product verification. The system is also being used to ensure compliance with standards for

medication storage and inspections and for compliance with state and national compounding standards.

In another display of dedication to the patient, Chartwell staff provide around-the-clock support and care for patients. Even during the middle of the night, “If they call, we’ll answer,” Kleppin proudly noted. While most problems are solved over the phone, if a patient is in urgent need of a new drug product, a pharmacist and technician will physically go into the pharmacy to prepare the new product to ensure that the patient receives the medication as soon as possible.

Under the ownership of UW Health, the pharmacists at Chartwell have a collaborative practice agreement that allows them to practice at the top of their license. The delegation agreement in place allows Chartwell pharmacists to order and monitor parenteral nutrition for patients followed by a UW Health physician and having their parenteral nutrition compounded at Chartwell. All Chartwell pharmacists are certified in nutrition

support through BPS or ASPEN, which ensures that adequate monitoring and quality care is provided for these complex patients.

Bumps in the Road

As with many pharmacy departments across the nation, drug and medication supply shortages are some of the most pressing obstacles for Chartwell to navigate. Hurricane Maria wreaked havoc across Puerto Rico, which is host to about 80 firms that manufacture drugs and medical supplies. The destruction has crippled Puerto Rico’s infrastructure. Many drug manufacturers are struggling to get restarted, which has resulted in drug shortages across the nation. “Almost all of the drugs we use are currently on shortage” Kleppin states, and some drugs now require manager approval to ensure that adequate supplies will be available for the patient to complete an entire course of therapy. The shortages are requiring some creative thinking, and management has had to order from different sources to maintain



Above: Day to Day Practice

a well-stocked supply. In addition, collaboration with UW Health on shortage information and supplies has been beneficial in dealing with drug shortages.

While drug shortages from Puerto Rico will eventually pass, Chartwell faces more chronic issues involving decreasing reimbursement from insurance companies, both government payers and commercial insurers alike. “We are consistently looking for ways that we can be more efficient in conducting business,” states Kleppin. “It is essential that the company remains financially healthy so that we can fulfill our mission of serving infusion patients.” Chartwell is striving to provide quality care and works collaboratively with prescribers and health systems to address patient-specific insurance issues related to infusion therapy.

Moving Forward

When asked about the future direction of Chartwell, Susan Kleppin believes that they will “see more antibiotic stewardship on the horizon,” in addition to provision of a wider array of medications in the future. Of course, when providing medications that treat more complex diseases, more complex patients will present to the organization. Chartwell is considering the implementation of a new electronic medical record and is preparing for compliance with the new standards of USP Chapter <800> and the upcoming changes to USP Chapter <797> and Wisconsin state law.

Heightened emphasis on cost containment in health care as well as developments in the clinical administration of therapy will continue to drive home infusion therapy. Home infusion may

not be right for every patient, but many intravenous medications can be safely administered in the home in a cost-effective manner and Chartwell is well positioned to provide this service and most importantly, deliver excellent clinical outcomes.

Connor Hanson, Andrew Vandermause, and Collin Dean are 3rd Year Doctor of Pharmacy Candidates at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy in Madison, WI.