

ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

Business Member Spotlight: Phillips Pharmacy Total Care

by William Blake, 2022 PharmD Candidate, Carolina Woloszyn, 2022 PharmD Candidate

Phillips Pharmacy Total Care, located in Mauston, WI, has been serving the community for over 70 years, including over 30 years of long-term care experience. In 1983, Wayne MacArdy joined the Phillips Pharmacy family. He later became owner and president, transforming this independent pharmacy into a multi-faceted pharmaceutical service to the surrounding community. Today, Phillips Pharmacy Total Care is well known for specializing in short-cycle pharmaceutical distribution and packaging, compounding, medical equipment and supplies, pharmacist consulting, and delivery services. Phillips Pharmacy Total Care employs 18 pharmacists, and over 40 pharmacy technicians across all locations. This team is responsible for providing services to over 2,500 patients in long-term facilities.

Day to Day Practice

Beginning his career in hospital pharmacy, Wayne eventually moved to Mauston, WI to continue clinical work at a local hospital. He sought additional employment at Phillips Pharmacy and joined as a part-time pharmacist in 1983. Wayne became an integral component of this retail pharmacy team and the community that it served. Wayne stated, *"I was always the idea guy, wanting to try something new."* His inquisitive nature, in tandem with the transition to full-time employment at the pharmacy, led to his acquisition of the business in 1988.

Today, Phillips Pharmacy Total Care, and its remote dispensing sites in Altoona and Milwaukee, are responsible for providing pharmaceutical services to various long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities, group homes, and secure nursing home facilities. These remote dispensing sites are able to increase the

pharmacy's geographic reach throughout the surrounding communities of Wisconsin. Pharmacy technicians operate and manage the remote dispensing sites where they offer specialized services for the 80 Phillips Pharmacy-associated facilities. Wayne travels between each location, surveying and inspecting the dispensing sites, visiting each facility to ensure the services provided are meeting the needs of not only the facilities but also the patients.

A large component of Wayne's success as an independent pharmacy owner is found in the communities he serves. As a way of saying thanks and giving back to his patients, Phillips Pharmacy Total Care provides scholarships to prospective medical students. Wayne also holds public outreach events such as health screenings and blood glucose testing for community members.

Below: Phillips Pharmacy in Mauston, WI.



Raising the Bar

Phillips Pharmacy Total Care has been redefining and expanding their niche in the pharmacy community using new and upcoming technologies to provide individualized and personal patient services. One such technology is pouch packaging, allowing them to compete toe-to-toe against larger chain pharmacies.

In this automated process, the dispensing machine takes a photograph of each strip, counting the number of medications within each strip. The software recognizes each medication within the strip, pre-verifying the accuracy of each dispensed medication before final verification is completed by a pharmacist. The strips are placed in chronological order, rolled up, and placed into sorting drawers where they await delivery to the residents every three to four days. This short-cycle allows for the reduction of medication waste.

This system has been used at the main Mauston location since 1995. After much success, it was expanded to the two remote dispensing sites. These remote dispensing sites represent an environment where certified pharmacy technicians run the show, with remote oversight from pharmacists in Mauston. Proximity to the patients as well as reduced delivery costs were deciding factors for having these remote locations.

The sister locations of Phillips Pharmacy Total Care in Friendship and Tomah, which opened in 1992 and 1997, respectively, use a similar operating system known as AdherePac™. This system provides patients with a 30-day supply of strip-pouches that are easier to understand and manage than the standard weekly pill containers.

Bumps in the Road

One of the main challenges that independent pharmacies face comes in the form of competition with large pharmacy chains. Phillips Pharmacy Total Care was joined in Mauston by Walgreens, which selected a nearby site to test their rural capabilities back in 1989. Despite this, Phillips Pharmacy Total Care has continued to flourish, providing unique pharmaceutical services and personalized pharmacy care to its customers. Wayne prides himself on being able to spend as much time as necessary counseling patients,



Above: Phillips Pharmacy using packaging technology to dispense prescriptions.

making sure they are well-educated on their medications. These values are what separate Phillips clearly from their competition.

Phillips Pharmacy Total Care employs over 25 pharmacy technicians in the Mauston location alone. In a small town with a population of just 4,700, it can be difficult to locate qualified pharmacy technicians. His solution was to search for pharmacy technicians beyond the Mauston community while still hiring residents of Wisconsin; he's offering employment to pharmacy technicians who can work from home, only requiring access to a computer system. Using a simple smartphone-based application, technicians can also assist in answering telephone calls, helping to reduce overall call volume.

Moving Forward

Phillips Pharmacy Total Care will continue to expand its business by adding more remote sites throughout Wisconsin to maintain a presence closer to care facilities that can benefit from scheduled medication strips across the state of Wisconsin. By pursuing further business relationships with skilled nursing home facilities, Wayne hopes to expand his existing delivery routes, as well as lay the groundwork for future growth in infrastructure.

Since Wayne became a pharmacist in 1979, he has personally witnessed numerous technological advancements; Wayne went from hand-writing each and every label to purchasing his first IBM typewriter to transcribe the labels. Wayne has seen the evolution of the duties of

pharmacy technicians, holding them in high regard for all that they contribute and their vital importance to both the pharmacy and their patients. Technicians are the backbone of his operation, helping pharmacists extend their reach even further. Wayne sees pharmacy technicians taking on an even greater role in the near future. In order to stay successful as an independent pharmacy owner, Wayne has shown the importance of adapting and embracing new and revolutionary technologies to make pharmacies more efficient, providing a better service to a larger community.

William Blake and Carolina Woloszyn are 2nd Year Doctor of Pharmacy Candidates at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science College of Pharmacy in North Chicago, IL.

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