

CASE STUDY

GREENVILLE MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER

PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE SOLUTIONS

Jay Terry

Manager of Pharmacy
Operations, GMMC

OVERVIEW

Greenville Memorial Medical Center (GMMC) is the 814-bed flagship facility of Greenville Health System (GHS), which is one of 12 hospitals that is now part of Prisma Health. Serving a variety of patient populations throughout the upstate and midlands regions of South Carolina, GMMC is committed to delivering the best possible patient care while promoting a safe, healthy, and efficient work environment for staff. This commitment holds true with regards to controlled substance waste disposal. In 2018, as the opioid epidemic continued to grow, GMMC, always cognizant of transforming health care for the benefit of the communities it serves, re-evaluated its processes to mitigate drug diversion, to ensure its controlled substance waste disposal methods were safe, compliant, and easy to implement.

According to Jay Terry, Manager of Pharmacy Operations at GMMC, "We were familiar with Stericycle's work because the company already handled and disposed of the hospitals' other pharmaceutical waste. Since Stericycle's waste management programs complement each other, organization leaders felt it made good sense to shift controlled waste disposal to Stericycle."

With the help of Stericycle's CsRx[®] Controlled Substance Waste Service, GMMC standardized its approach to controlled substance waste management, lessening the staff's burden involved in the effort and implementing a reliable and proactive program that cost-effectively mitigates the risk of diversion, while preserving the environment.



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SOLVING CHALLENGES

Before turning to Stericycle, GMMC used another waste management company for controlled waste disposal and found several challenges with the equipment. First, the hospital's pharmacy staff were tasked with servicing the waste containers, which entailed periodically emptying them, replacing batteries, setting up new receptacles, and so on. “Not only was this onerous, it also pulled staff away from their patient-focused duties, which was frustrating for both patients and staff,” said Terry. In addition, because the receptacles were relatively small, they often overflowed, resulting in an increased diversion risk as well as a safety hazard.

By switching to CsRx, GMMC was able to remove the burden of servicing the containers from staff. Trained Stericycle technicians pick up the containers at pre-determined times, and staff members do not need to be involved in the process. At the time of pickup, technicians add a solidifying agent to the waste to make it solid prior to shipping, preserving safety and further preventing diversion. They then replace used containers with new ones that are ready for immediate use. Once the technician removes the waste from the facility, it is completely disposed of through incineration, which is recommended by the Environment Protection Administration (EPA) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

Along with its superior service and reliability, GMMC was also attracted to Stericycle's simple-to-use containers that automatically deactivate controlled substances on contact without requiring batteries or other tools. The specially designed receptacles render waste unusable, curtailing the chances of diversion. Because Stericycle technicians proactively pickup and dispose of the receptacles, they never overflow, maintaining a safe working environment.



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RESULTS

By switching to Stericycle's CsRx service, GMMC now has a streamlined and reliable process for disposing of controlled substance waste. "Not only has the program been cost-effective and easy to implement, but the day-to-day aspects do not pull staff away from patients because Stericycle provides an end-to-end service," said Pearson.

The program has reduced the risk of drug diversion through its proactive disposal processes and its use of waste containers that are engineered to mitigate theft. The service is environmentally friendly as well, using incineration to limit the possibility of controlled substances leaching into the surrounding environment.

To further strengthen and increase mitigation of drug diversion, the participating Prisma hospitals utilize the product training that Stericycle provides, which involves an expert coming on-site to fully brief staff on how to properly dispose of controlled substance waste. Stericycle also offers posters, instruction sheets, and other collateral to easily remind staff how to follow procedures.

By partnering with Stericycle, GMMC and its partner Prisma hospitals safeguard staff, patients, and the environment by employing Stericycle's CsRx and other waste disposal services. Staff find CsRx to be safe and efficient, and organization leaders are confident that the hospital's controlled substance waste disposal is reliable, consistent, and compliant.

For more information, visit stericycle.com/CsRx or call (866) 338-5120.

Comprehensive Waste Solutions Tailored to Your Pharmacy's Needs

Provide your patients with safe medication disposal: Seal&SendSM mail back envelopes and our award-winning drug take back kiosk.

Advance your hospital's drug diversion program with CsRx[®], the industry-leading controlled substance waste program.

Efficient disposal for your hazardous pharmaceutical waste.



Protect your business and your patients' PHI with Shred-it[®] secure information destruction.

Improve your immunization program with our cost effective and convenient mail back sharps container service.

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