

CASE STUDY



Partnering for Integrity, Efficacy and Patient Care

Focus on Best Practices Increases Patient Satisfaction and Boosts Business Growth



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About Encompass Rx

Encompass Rx is a locally owned and operated independent specialty pharmacy based in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded by the owners, John Olsen, Maney Mazloom, and Dee Renade, they are focused on patient care for individuals with chronic diseases, believing that their role as clinical pharmacist does not begin or end with the dispensing of a prescription. The Encompass care model includes everything from formulary support and prior authorization management to injection training and financial assistance.

Background

In just over 4 years, Encompass Rx has grown beyond their wildest dreams. What started as a regional specialty pharmacy focused on the greater Atlanta area is now a fully URAC-accredited, 50+ person company licensed in over 30 states. The three owners have over 25 years combined experience in specialty pharmacy. John Olsen, PharmD., attributes this growth and success to utilizing industry **best practices**.

Challenged by Regulation

"A perfect example of how best practices can truly help us take better care of our patients is how we faced the challenge of Georgia Rule 480-48 in 2014," said Olsen.¹ In late 2014, the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy issued the rule requiring pharmacies to ensure that any drug requiring storage at "anything other than room temperature" that is being delivered or mailed have packaging with a "USP-recognized method by which the patient can easily detect improper storage or temperature variations."

"We knew we had to make some changes in how we operated," he stated. This new regulation came only two years into the young company's founding, but Encompass Rx faced the challenge head on—as an opportunity.

¹http://gphabuzz.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Rule-480-48-Delivery-by-Mail-Order_Effective-10-7-2014.pdf

Finding Opportunity in the Solution

With the introduction of the new regulation, Encompass Rx began to seek out an appropriate temperature indicator. They evaluated several visual temperature indicators, and made a decision to use Temptime's LIMITmarker®.

"We had not previously investigated temperature indicators, simply because we thought they'd be cost-prohibitive," said Olsen. "But at the same time, our patients are our number one priority and the last thing we want is to have a patient concerned about their medication." After investigation, Encompass Rx felt even more strongly that implementing a temperature indicator was the right thing to do, regardless of the regulation.

"We loved the idea, and wanted to make it happen," he said. "We work hard to make sure our patient's medications are carefully delivered, in a timely manner, and their peace of mind is important to us. It was almost serendipitous that the rule and our desire to do this happened at the same time."

Implementing Change

During the evaluation phase of temperature indicators, Encompass Rx focused on **minimizing steps**.

"We have specific protocols and a fine-tuned shipping process," John described. "When testing the various indicators, we quickly determined that implementing use of the LIMITmarker indicator added one simple step of sticking the indicator on the product bag before it goes into the cooler."

Other products required extra steps like pulling a tab for activation, or opportunities for what Olsen described as "more human error." In the end, they determined that LIMITmarker was more user-friendly and they were more confident about implementing it into their processes.

"Implementation went smoothly for us," he added. "The Temptime team was great to work with—they helped us understand how the indicators work and where to place them. We had no hiccups at all."



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Addressing Fears

Encompass Rx's primary "fear of the unknown" was that incorporating temperature indicators could have a negative impact on their business. Instead of improving reliability and shipment integrity, what if there were false indications causing customer complaints and costly reshipments that would negatively affect the bottom line?

"We were honestly concerned that false positives might result in a negative ROI, so we did a range of internal tests of our own," said Olsen. "Plus, Temptime provided us with white papers and product quality details and in the end, we figured out that LIMITmarker was a safe bet, a good product."

Expanding Use for Patient Satisfaction

While it's not mandated, Encompass Rx includes a temperature indicator with every refrigerated product that they send out. Many drugs have extended stability data and are stable at room temperature or even higher temperatures for up to 30 days. Some pharmacies wouldn't find it necessary to use indicators on these types of drugs, but Encompass Rx has learned that indicators go a long way in helping their patients feel comfortable and confident about their medications.

And, it's working. Encompass Rx has earned the trust of their patients, with a solid **patient satisfaction rating of 97%**.

Justifying ROI

"The **amount of reshipments has decreased probably ten-fold** since we started using indicators," exclaimed Olsen. "We rarely reship products anymore. Previously during the hot summer months here in the southeast, we would get at least one call a day regarding product integrity due to concerns about heat exposure."

"The indicators pay for themselves quickly," he added. With an average shipping cost of \$20-\$25 plus the average medication product cost of \$4000, the elimination of one reshipment pays for an entire quarterly order of indicators.

Olsen described that all **patient concern phone calls** are monitored closely and reviewed quarterly. With two years of indicator use under their belts, Encompass Rx has deemed

the indicator use "very effective, and incredibly impactful on our business of taking care of patients." Additional ROI is realized since Encompass Rx employees are taking dramatically fewer patient calls—that in the past consumed resources and increased costs.

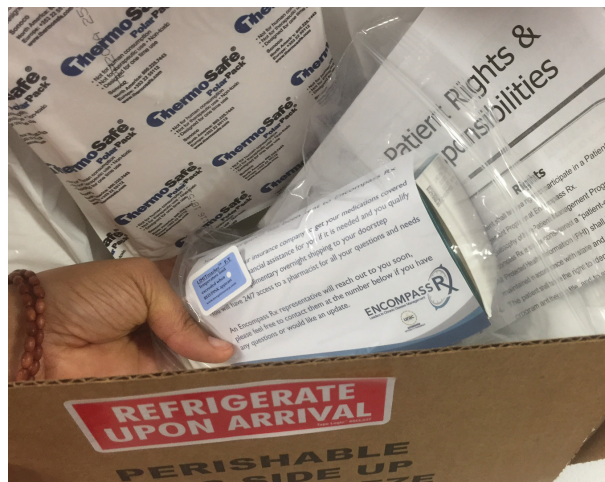
Protecting Patients is Good for Business

John and his partners have quickly learned in their 4 fast years of business that manufacturers, payers, healthcare providers and accrediting bodies alike are always looking to see what pharmacies are doing to **protect patients**.

"Utilizing **best practices across the board** is our goal and always on our minds—and an absolute necessity," said Olsen. "Nearly all RFPs ask what we are doing to **monitor for integrity, efficacy and safety**. Steps like implementing temperature indicators are crucial."

Encompass Rx has achieved URAC accreditation and is in the process of pursuing three additional certifications. To grow their business with payers and pharmaceutical companies, they have committed to achieving these essential best practices.

"It's a lot of work and a lot of money. But we want to set the standard—for patients, for providers, for specialty pharmacies like ourselves—and that means taking every step toward top quality," concluded Olsen. "And that's why Temptime and LIMITmarker are perfect for us—they're helping us on our journey." ■



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97%

97% of medication recipients said they prefer a specialty pharmacy that uses the TransTracker® indicator in its shipments*

*Based on "Experience of Specialty Pharmacies in TransTracker Product-In-Use Patient Research" with over 8000 patient responses

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