

CASE STUDY

AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION & EPICOR WORK HAND IN HAND TO INNOVATE AND MAXIMIZE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE



Jeremy Zellers

Deputy Chief Pharmacy Officer
~ AIDS Healthcare Foundation
(AHF)

INTRODUCTION

In February 1987, Michael Weinstein and several other activists founded the AIDS Hospice Committee in Los Angeles. Their goal: to provide medical and palliative care to individuals living through the final stages of AIDS.

As the management of HIV and AIDS improved, the Committee shifted its focus to helping individuals live with the disease — and became the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) in 1990. About two decades later, AHF acquired the MOMS Pharmacy chain and rebranded the chain as AHF Pharmacy.

Today, AHF is the largest global AIDS organization, providing cutting-edge medicine and advocacy to more than 1.6 million people in 45 countries. The organization's mission is to rid the world of AIDS via a network of thrift stores, strategic partnerships, and pharmacies.

An independently owned pharmacy with 65 pharmacies in 16 states, the AHF Pharmacy competes with numerous big-box stores. "We process more than 10,000 prescriptions a day," explains Jeremy Zellers, AHF's deputy chief pharmacy officer. "As a result, our entire business needs to run smoothly, and we must stay competitive."

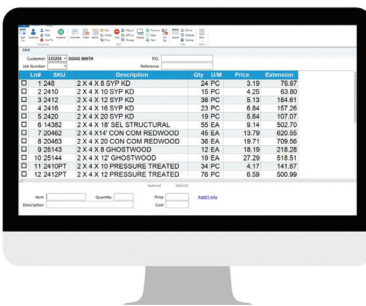
He adds, "Due to problems with our point-of-sale (POS) software, we decided to move to a more reliable platform. We stumbled across Epicor, and we never looked back. After assessing our needs and challenges, they proposed the Epicor Eagle N Series POS pharmacy system. The new functionality of their POS system, as well as Epicor's strong partnership, exceeded all of our expectations."

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STREAMLINING DELIVERY

Promoting business growth is the main function of Epicor's Eagle N Series.

“The management solution works with an organization's pharmacy management system (PMS) to provide point of sale, inventory, purchasing, accounting, and marketing capabilities that independent pharmacies need in order to maximize business performance,” explains Zachary Pfeil, industry marketing principal at Epicor. “The system optimizes pharmacy practices and is extremely easy to learn and navigate.”

One of the most critical pieces of AHF's Pharmacy operation is prescription delivery. “When we first began implementing our new delivery system, we quickly realized that using laptops was not a good solution for us because the VPN connection process was too challenging and time consuming for drivers,” says Zellers.

To solve the problem, Epicor proposed the Dispatch and Delivery Management System (DDMS). “Originally established for flower and lumber delivery – and designed to eliminate all manual processes – this technology was exactly what we needed,” explains Zellers. “Epicor helped us adapt DDMS to the pharmacy world. The solution not only provides convenience and accuracy, but it greatly enhances customer satisfaction. In the new retail world we live in, customers expect more, so easy delivery, tracking, and accounting/billing are essential to creating a successful patient experience.”

DDMS displays real-time order status and enables drivers to use smart phones to complete tasks, such as sending out emails when medications are out for delivery, taking photos of the delivery site, and capturing signatures. The system even reminds customers to refrigerate their medications after delivery. These new capabilities create enhanced accountability and trackability in their delivery process, says Zellers, which is particularly critical for insurance purposes due to the often high cost of these medications.

The barcode scanning technology automates the entire process and moves the order status through the dispatch and delivery process. Additionally, Epicor's GPS tracker is an add-on feature that provides a map of the service area, which ensures that drivers are taking the fastest route possible.

“During the height of the COVID pandemic, many of our facilities shut down. As a result, the number of our deliveries – compared to in-person pick-ups – increased drastically,” says Zellers. “What would have been a chaotic situation was made manageable with DDMS. Because the system is so easy to use, we were able to pivot and focus our efforts on delivery. In fact, many staff members became drivers with the help of the DDMS system.”

In addition to an improved delivery system, AHF was looking to enhance its pharmacy workflow. Epicor suggested INET, an online portal for customers to manage their accounts via online payment systems.

“Before INET, we generated a large number of invoices and mailed them out to customers. Now this process is completely automated, saving us a lot of time and money on labor and postage costs,” says Zellers. “While we were sending out thousands of monthly statements, we are now down to only about 300 invoices each month. That's a huge improvement.”

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KEYS TO SUCCESS

Throughout the entire implementation process, Epicor held quarterly business reviews to assess AHF’s needs and discuss ongoing challenges. And Epicor provided a project management team to help AHF roll out the new POS in an organized and timely fashion. Today, all 65 pharmacies are using Epicor’s POS.

“Epicor listened to us, supported us, and helped us meet our needs by being innovative and collaborative,” explains Zellers. “While the entire process took about a year to complete, we probably could have done it in less time, but we wanted to do it right.”

He adds, “AHF’s partnership was more than just deploying software tools. They not only analyzed our needs and developed the best solutions for us, but they deployed the POS, trained our staff, and provided ongoing support to aid us in becoming more efficient. This, in turn, improved our customer satisfaction and profitability — and helped our business grow.”

The hands-on, dialed in industry experts

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solution, driving business growth,
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