

CASE STUDY

STRIP COMPLIANCE PACKAGING A BENEFIT FOR PHARMACY AND FACILITY



NEIL MEDICAL GROUP

PERSON CENTERED CARE, PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES



Ross Brickley

Vice President of
Pharmacy Services
~ Neil Medical Group

INTRODUCTION

Headquartered in Kinston, North Carolina, Neil Medical Group is a trusted pharmacy services partner for long-term/post-acute care and assisted living providers across the southeast. Neil Medical, founded in 1984, distributes medical equipment and supplies, drugs and surgical products, as well as providing pharmacy, therapy, and consulting services.

As a long-term care pharmacy, Neil Medical functions as a distribution warehouse, while also focusing on successful patient outcomes. In order to develop a strong customer base, Neil Medical continuously strives to improve accuracy, efficiency, and productivity, while also focusing on cost containment.

"As a high-volume pharmacy, we needed to evolve and move away from the outdated punch card system we had been using for more than 30 years, not an easy change," explains Ross Brickley, vice president of pharmacy services at Neil Medical. "Our goal was to improve pharmacy workflow, increase productivity, and provide exceptional service to our customers; but we needed a partner."

Ultimately, Neil Medical selected Noritsu as their partner. "Noritsu's automated pharmaceutical packaging technology not only allowed us to efficiently automate drug packaging, but provided us with the ability to ensure accuracy. We were very impressed with Noritsu's machinery, as well as their demonstrably strong customer support."

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INTEGRATING AUTOMATION FROM SCRIPT TO PATIENT ADMINISTRATION

Because pharmacy workflow impacts every element of a pharmacy, Noritsu began by conducting a detailed workflow analysis. They examined how pharmacists and staff spend their time, how quickly facilities get access to their medications, how much space and staff are required to accomplish each task, the complexity of patient needs, and the accuracy of medication dispensing and administration.

To maximize Neil Medical's pharmacy workflow, the Noritsu team suggested site visits and phone calls with existing Noritsu customers to review essential technology and implementation options.

The first recommendation was a Xana 4001 strip pouch packager, which would provide improvements in speed, accuracy, and safety while reducing errors in pharmacy production. Brickley confirmed his team's experiences, "strip pouch packaging has ensured that patients have the correct dosage, making the administration of meds much easier for staff, and improving medication compliance."

The second recommendation was an MDM-3 medication detection machine. Verifying medications can be very tedious, but it's essential. Medication detection machines save valuable time by helping to identify pill pouches that must receive extra scrutiny ultimately ensuring confidence and accuracy in every dispense.

By automating the medication detection into a scan plus review with verification while automatically adding the cutting and sorting into one system, Neil Medical was able to improve accuracy at a cost savings versus 100% manual review by PharmD's and extra pharm tech labor.

In the end, Neil Medical has implemented the Noritsu solution across four pharmacies to date, purchasing five Xana 4001 pouch packagers and four MDM-3 medication detection systems.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The results have been quite impressive for Neil Medical. "We are now at an 80 % conversion rate," explains Brickley. "With four operating pharmacies, this has been a remarkably fast conversion, especially considering the two-year process took place during a global pandemic."

In addition, Neil Medical has already seen a notable 20 to 25 % improvement in medication dispensing accuracy. "The strip pouch packaging system has not only improved our pharmacy efficiency and safety, but the ability to tie into our eMar [electronic medication administration record] system creates less steps in the administration process," explains Brickley.

Brickley indicated that he worked closely with Noritsu to ensure eMar integration for his facilities. "eMar integration was a key advantage of Noritsu's NexusRx software,

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which we found unique to the industry. Rather than scanning a separate barcode for each medication, nursing/med aide staff can scan a single barcode on the pouch, which our caregivers have found reduces the number of repetitive steps incurred during the medication pass, ensuring that the right meds are given at the right time."

When it comes to achieving their lofty goals, Neil Medical is extremely satisfied with the outcome. "There is no question that Noritsu exceeded our expectations," says Brickley. "Their collaboration, implementation, and support were top-notch."

NORITSU'S STRIP PACKAGING AUTOMATION

Improves productivity, accuracy, and increases a pharmacy's bottom line.

■ PRODUCTIVITY

- Easier to receive and verify medications from the pharmacy.
- Improved ergonomics due to medical staff being able to tear open one pouch, instead of popping multiple blisters and opening vials.
- Easier to identify the correct meds for the correct patient.
- Less repetitive steps with eMar integration and a one-barcode scan.
- Enhanced caregiver time with each patient.

■ ACCURACY

- Automated detection with MDC station is more accurate than manual verification.
- Boxes can be labeled with easily readable content labels containing medication data.
- Pouches include easy-to-read information and patient images.
- Single eMar barcode verifies meds, so it is easier to ensure patients have received all medications in each med pass.

■ FLEXIBILITY AT ADMINISTRATION

- Easily variable cycle times and exceptions.
- Perfect pouch options allow for pouch customization.
- Decreased waste due to ease-of-cycle time variability.
- Ease-of-med time exceptions.

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Reliability

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Pharmacy Automation

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