

“Canada’s Prettiest Town”

On the afternoon of Sunday August 21, 2011, a tornado ripped through “Canada’s Prettiest Town” - Goderich, Ontario. The damage was significant and left the community devastated.

Pharmacy staff at Alexandra Marine & General Hospital (AMGH) in Goderich, Ontario had been working to realize the vision of moving forward with unit dose medication packaging and implementation of automated dispensing cabinets when this disaster struck.

With the backdrop of destruction, a project team that included pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, information technology, facilities management, nursing staff, project management, and hospital leadership was focused on building a medication system at AMGH that would enhance medication safety and also meet the following CSHP 2015 objectives:

Objective 4.7: 75% of pharmacies in hospitals utilize a unit-dose system for drug distribution for 90% or more of their total beds

Objective 5.1: 75% of hospitals will use machine-readable coding to verify medications before dispensing

The rationale for this project was simple – to improve the safety of the medication system and as a result patient care. Other benefits included compliance with Accreditation Canada managing medication standards, enhanced levels of inventory control of medications and improved efficiency of workflow for both nursing and pharmacy staff. The project included the purchase and implementation of a manual unit dose packaging machine and six automated dispensing cabinets supported by machine readable coding.

Before the project started, AMGH relied on a ‘traditional’ medication system with weekly cart exchanges supplemented by wardstock in patient care areas. In order to help transform the medication system in the most efficient manner possible, a regional initiative was undertaken with Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance. Together the two organizations (AMGH and HPHA) developed a shared approach to the procurement of equipment and project planning. The work was led by a shared project manager using the tools of project methodology to ensure success and a shared vision that AMGH and HPHA committed to:

“Through dynamic, collaborative medication delivery systems, we promote and sustain, safe, quality, patient-centered care”

With a great deal of planning, hard work, and applying the lessons learned from the automated dispensing cabinet implementation at HPHA, the AMGH project team moved this initiative forward at AMGH over the winter and spring of 2012. Teamwork and dedication are two key words that describe the approach that project team members and pharmacy staff demonstrated throughout this time period. Our medication system was being transformed, similar to the rebuilding and reconstruction that was occurring in the community of Goderich.

In August 2012, a year after the tornado struck, the community of Goderich came together to reflect...

At Alexandra Marine & General Hospital we also reflected on the fact that a unit dose medication packaging and automated dispensing cabinet system was in place that required medications coded prior to placement in the cabinet. ***The vision of the project team had been realized.***

Our team had achieved success and met objective 4.7 and 5.1 of CSHP 2015. For the time period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 approximately 87% of medication doses dispensed at AMGH were obtained from the automated dispensing cabinets at AMGH.

During this time, I had the pleasure of acting in a leadership role to the project team and pharmacy staff as the Regional Director, Pharmacy Services for AMGH and HPHA.

The community of Goderich continues to rebuild and renew itself.....

In a similar fashion, the pharmacy team at AMGH is also focused on renewal and new approaches to providing patient care – we are proud of our success to date in ‘targeting excellence in pharmacy practice’ and look forward to further enhancing the care we provide our patients.

Respectfully Submitted,

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