

A Powerful Automated Narcotic Management System



Jackson Hospital and Clinic

Location: Montgomery, Alabama

Beds: 377

This article examines how one hospital, Jackson Hospital and Clinic, experienced the benefits of Omnicell's automatic narcotic dispensing system with software from Ariel for a complete narcotic management solution.

“We quickly realized the benefits of the Sure-Med[®] cabinets. They helped us eliminate much of the paperwork associated with dispensing narcotics, since all activity is recorded automatically by the cabinets.”

Dave Griffies, PharmD, Director of Pharmacy

Pharmacists are well aware of how time-consuming and paperwork-intensive narcotic inventory management, dispensing, and reporting can be. But imagine, for a moment, if there was a simple way to eliminate much of this narcotic-related drudgery. Imagine a system that could automatically maintain your central narcotic inventory; manage your narcotic floor stock; collect patient administration data for record-keeping and patient billing; detect and prevent narcotic diversion; generate comprehensive reports (including reports required by state and federal regulatory agencies, such as the DEA Form 41); and interface easily to your hospital's other computer systems.

Sound too good to be true?

Today, Omnicell's automated pharmacy systems, in conjunction with Ariel Distributing's SecureMed narcotic vault management software, can do all these tasks and more, simplifying the entire process of narcotic inventory management, dispensing, and reporting.

Automated Narcotic Management Comes to Jackson Hospital and Clinic

One hospital that has experienced the benefits of automated narcotic management is Jackson Hospital and Clinic, a 377-bed, not-for-profit, acute care medical center located in Montgomery, Alabama.

“We began looking at automating our narcotic inventory management, dispensing, and reporting processes back in 1994,” recalled Dave Griffies, PharmD, director of pharmacy at Jackson.

Prior to automation, Jackson used the “shingle” sheet system that many medical institutions use to issue, track, and document narcotic usage.

“For us, the shingle sheet system became too time-consuming; and being a paper-based system, it made it difficult to track narcotic use throughout the hospital. Furthermore, we were beginning to drown in paperwork with this system.

“We saw automated dispensing systems as a way to effectively streamline the way we managed, tracked, and dispensed narcotics,” added Griffies. After analyzing the various systems that were available, Jackson narrowed its

choices down to two, eventually selecting Omnicell's (then Baxter's) Sure-Med® Unit-Dose Center with Sure-Med Modular Expansion Cabinets.

"We chose the Sure-Med Unit-Dose Center based on the positive responses we received from the hospital's nursing and pharmacy staff, who had the opportunity test and compare the two competing choices," said Griffies. "They felt that Sure-Med was more intuitive and easier to use. They also liked the larger screen available on Sure-Med."

Jackson chose to implement its narcotics automation program in phases. It began by first installing Sure-Med cabinets in its ER, OR, and medical-surgical units. "We were impressed with how smoothly the installation and implementation of the Sure-Med System went," recalled Griffies.

What Is the Sure-Med Unit-Dose Center?

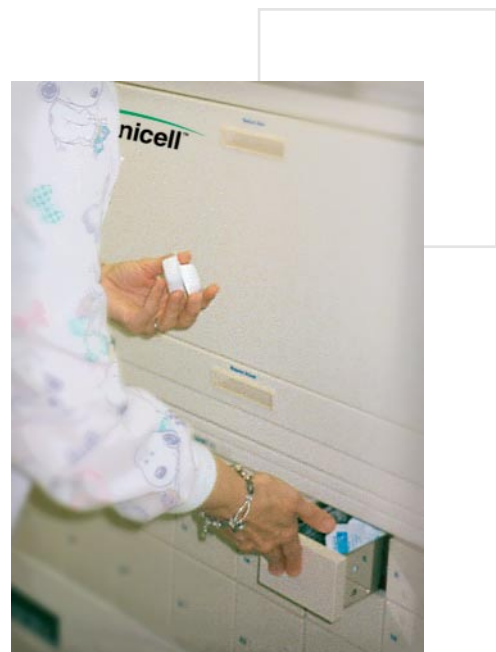
The Sure-Med Unit-Dose Center is one of several automated medication dispensing and replenishment systems offered by Omnicell. Sure-Med is designed to help medical institutions effectively manage large quantities of controlled substances and other high-value medications while offering user-friendly, time-saving, touch screen technology. Every dose stored in the Sure-Med Unit-Dose Center is released individually, recorded automatically, and requires no counting when dispensed or at the end-of-shift.

"We quickly realized the benefits of the Sure-Med cabinets," noted Griffies. "They helped us eliminate much of the paperwork associated with dispensing narcotics, since all activity is recorded automatically by the cabinets."

The Sure-Med cabinets also allowed Jackson's nursing and pharmacy staff to become more productive.

"Our nurses no longer had to waste time counting narcotics since the Sure-Med cabinets track this information automatically," said Griffies. "And since narcotics are now securely dispensed right in the patient care area, our nurses make fewer trips to the pharmacy and our pharmacists make

Accessing medications from the Sure-Med cabinet is fast and simple.



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fewer trips to the floor. Patients also receive their medications in a more timely manner.”

Jackson Expands Its Automation Program

Jackson was so pleased with the first phase of its Sure-Med implementation that it decided to expand its narcotics automation program throughout the hospital in 1997.

“It was during this time when Ariel’s SecureMed narcotics vault software became available,” said Griffies. “SecureMed offers features that, when combined with Omnicell’s automated cabinets, like Sure-Med, allow us to manage and track each and every step of controlled substance activity—from the narcotics vault to the patient—with exceptional accuracy and limited labor requirements.”

What Is SecureMed?

Offered in partnership with Omnicell, the Ariel SecureMed narcotic vault management software provides a simple and effective approach to narcotics control using bar-code technology. Specifically designed for hospital or clinic use, this labor-saving system maintains a central narcotics inventory, manages nursing floor stock of narcotics, and collects patient administration data for record-keeping and charging purposes.

SecureMed also tracks returned items and maintains a separate auditable inventory to support preparation and direct imaging of the DEA Form for Drugs Surrendered. Special security features also help detect and inhibit narcotic diversion.

SecureMed can be used as a complete stand-alone software system or in conjunction with automated pharmacy dispensing and replenishment cabinets, like Omnicell’s Sure-Med, to form a complete narcotics management system. SecureMed interfaces directly with these systems to provide a complete, integrated narcotic solution, automatically validating transactions and efficiently closing the loop between pharmacy and the nursing floor.

The Benefits of Automated Narcotics Management

Today, Jackson utilizes SecureMed in conjunction with 21 Sure-Med units located throughout the hospital.

"We're very pleased with what we've achieved with our Sure-Med/SecureMed system," noted Griffies. "It's had a tremendous impact on narcotics inventory management, dispensing, and reporting here at Jackson.

"First," said Griffies, "it's eliminated most of our narcotics paperwork since all narcotics activity is automatically tracked and documented by the system. It's also made the data we have on our narcotics utilization much more accurate and dependable, so auditing is greatly simplified.

"The numerous reporting capabilities SecureMed offers have also been a real time-saver," added Griffies. "It automatically generates discrepancy reports and DEA destruction reports. In fact, SecureMed offers more than 100 different reports, and you can apply 'filters' to refine the reports to fit your needs. With all the different reporting options, you can pretty much 'slice and dice' your data any way you see fit with this system.

The Omnicell/SecureMed Solution:

Improves narcotic security
Increases narcotic revenue
Eliminates expensive shingle sheets and special pre-printed forms
Reduces pharmacy clerical effort
Documents all narcotic activity
Improves data accuracy and dependability
Manages central pharmacy and nursing station narcotic inventories
Reduces narcotic inventory
Increases inventory turnover
Inhibits narcotic diversion
Eliminates hoarding and floor stock outages or imbalances due to improper ordering
Reduces nursing and pharmacy staff time involved with controlled drug substances
Compatible with existing pharmacy and nursing procedures

"The Sure-Meds and SecureMed together have also helped us to get a better grasp on our narcotics inventory, which has helped reduce hoarding, floor stock imbalances, and outages caused by improper ordering," said Griffies.

"Performing our inventory validation with the SecureMed bar-code reader has saved us significant staff time as well," added Griffies. "What used to take more than two hours we can now complete in less than half an hour.

"Finally," he added, "since our Sure-Med/SecureMed system has significantly reduced the time our nurses and pharmacists have to spend dealing with controlled substances, they now have more time for clinical activities and patient care. So the system creates a win-win situation for everyone involved—from the hospital, to the staff, to the patients."



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