

RETAIL NEWS BREAKS

Biometric integration yields benefits at Astrup Drug

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ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Pharmacists at Astrup Drug Inc. are more in tune with their patients' health since integrating PharmaSmart biometric screening technology with the regional drug chain's Rx30 pharmacy system.

PharmaSmart International Inc. reported Friday that the integrated biometric solution, now deployed across Astrup's store network, is triggering timely patient interventions and counseling sessions, as well as boosting medication therapy management (MTM) case recruitment for hypertension patients.

Austin, Minn.-based Astrup has 21 pharmacies in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. Via the solution, which links the chain's pharmacy system with PharmaSmart's health screening kiosks, Astrup pharmacists are presented with color-coded icons in the patient health record, alerting them to the patient's biometric screening status. Icon status is based on average readings, and in the most severe cases flashing red icons indicate the need for immediate intervention. The process eventually initiates a referral to the pharmacist for follow-up care with the patient.

By clicking on the program icon, the pharmacist accesses an advanced clinical portal that provides an overview of the patient's biometric history, according to PharmaSmart. That data is integrated into standardized medication review sessions. In addition, comprehensive program data is available to assess risk stratification and biometric trending geographically across the full patient population.

"With chronic diseases such as hypertension, drug therapy is complex and medication adherence is a major challenge. This creates a costly care gap that the pharmacists can help address, if they have the right tools," Tim Gallagher, chief operating officer at Astrup Drug, said in a statement. "This investment helps our pharmacists obtain a higher-quality cognitive assessment, which supports the objectives of the patient, the physician and the health plan.

Gallagher noted that the integration, announced in March, creates "a real-time, permanent bridge" between the PharmaSmart health kiosk and Astrup pharmacists.

"We worked closely with PharmaSmart and [Transaction Data Systems'] Rx30 to optimize the program, ensuring workflow integration so that it can be sustained over the long term," he explained. "Our pharmacists were involved in a structured beta phase and provided key input to both companies. This collaborative approach between all stakeholders yielded great results."

PharmaSmart provides validated patient biometrics within Rx30, "allowing pharmacists to target not just adherence but actual clinical outcomes," noted Steve Wubker, president of Transaction Data Systems. "Rx30 can only integrate patient data if the source is clinically validated and peer reviewed. Because of their device validity and unique interoperable framework, PharmaSmart provides unique value to emerging pharmacy care models and solves a problem that pharmacy software providers have historically faced."

According to Ashton Maaraba, chief operating officer of PharmaSmart, more biometrics are being added to the PharmaSmart platform.

"PharmaSmart's next-generation kiosk, launching in 2014, will include weight, BMI [body mass index], cardiac arrhythmia detection and blood glucose, supported by full interoperability with the pharmacy system and physician EMR [electronic medical record]," Maaraba stated. "Our program allows retailers to collaborate with regional and national health plans to offer the plans high-value cognitive services and large-scale biometric outcome metrics via our PS DataSmart platform. These solutions reduce the cost per life covered and deliver significant new revenue channels for our retail clients."