

# With over 400 reference sites SynMed® leads blister pack automation



EFFICIENCY



ACCURACY



FLEXIBILITY



PROFITABILITY



## For Pharmacies :

- **Flexibility** to provide optimal packaging to both retail and LTC patients
- Peace of mind with **proven precision**
- Unparalleled **efficiency** with production rates up to 200 bingo cards/hr and 100 multi-dose cards/hr.

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 **SynMed®**  
Synergy Medical Technology



# Automated solutions can help to streamline pharmacies

NEW YORK — Pharmacists have come to rely increasingly on technology to perform tasks both repetitive and highly complex on a daily basis. Computer technology has been embraced so heavily because of the many benefits automation brings: Routine and repetitive tasks can be performed faster and with a greater degree of accuracy. As the trend toward automation accelerates, this evolving technology continues to have a major impact on the future of pharmacy.

For pharmacies, workplace automation now offers sophisticated robotic dispensing equipment. By automating the entire fulfillment process, pharmacies are able to very quickly dispense the proper medicine to the correct patient, with a much higher rate of accuracy. Information technology is also being utilized to digitize, deliver and store structured patient records, facilitating better collaboration between different caregiving entities, all working on behalf of

the patient to provide a better continuum of care.

Mike Coughlin, president, chief executive officer and chief financial officer of ScriptPro says that the current area of focus for technology companies that has the most significant implication for the future of retail pharmacy is on fully integrated solutions. "ScriptPro provides fully integrated pharmacy operating solutions, including patient-centric tools like refill reminders and reporting to show status of meds on hand for patients. ScriptPro provides complete solutions that address the key functions that need to work for the pharmacy, he says. "ScriptPro robots operate in pharmacies around the world, saving time and preventing errors. They become work drivers in the pharmacy and free pharmacists up from manual dispensing tasks." With even greater focus on DIR (direct and indirect remuneration) fees in 2020, ScriptPro offers tools that help pharmacies gain



PharmASSIST High Volume Solutions for mail-order pharmacies.

better insight on their financial operations. Its Third Party Management System tracks revenues against contracts, organizes data for effective exception-based action, and highlights ordering opportunities.

Mark Rinker, vice president of sales for North America at Synergy Medical, says his company realizes the business of pharmacy is increasingly a low-margin, high-volume business. "When margins decrease, you need more volume to retain profit. Our focus with the SynMed XF and SynMed ULTRA Systems is significant reduction of time to produce blister packs with a high degree of accuracy. Efficient processes allow growth without adding labor, and less time focused on dispensing is more time for service revenue opportunities. We believe this is the way for pharmacies to survive and thrive in this environment."

Rinker notes that multidose blister packaging is still in its infancy in the U.S., compared to other country markets where 30% to 40% of all retail prescriptions are dispensed in a multidose blister pack. "That being said, many U.S. pharmacy chains are at varying stages of adopting their own adherence packaging program. The challenge is locations are busy and can't afford time to absorb another manual production task; they need a central fill automation solution right off the start. That's where SynMed comes in to offer a turn-key automation and software solution to enable this strategy. SynMed technology powers virtually every single multidose blister card central-fill operation in North America. From independent pharmacy owners with two or more locations processing hundreds of patients to national pharmacy chains processing tens of thousands of patients."

He adds that pharmacies, particularly long-term care pharmacies that are prepackaging blister cards, are adding to their workflow, comparatively speak-

ing, with workflow using the SynMed robot. Without SynMed, staff prepackage their most popular prescriptions (manually or with automation), hang the packages on a wall, retrieve the package when they have an order, apply a prescription label, manually fill any orders that have not been prepackaged, and finally collate the orders. "With SynMed, you can eliminate the prepackaging and fill orders on demand. The software presorts orders by patient/floor/facility so the collation happens automatically before production begins. Orders are filled smoothly with fewer touches, and without the inventory cost of the drug wall," he concludes.

tions for centralizing prescription fulfillment are on almost every retail chain's radar. We continue to hear from the chains that they want to reduce their cost-to-fill prescriptions and pull the drag of refilling prescriptions out of their stores. They want and need to free up their pharmacists and staff to expand and deliver patient services."

He adds that the company has also invested tons of time and energy into the fine-tuning of its PharmASSIST Symphony for High Volume platform, and it has paid enormous dividends for its central fill/mail order customers. "Symphony's use of artificial intelligence and machine learning enables them to better manage their site's prescription demand and continually optimize their high-volume workflow. We're helping them achieve their various throughput, cost reduction and patient safety goals."

He adds that workflow tools and prepackaging are helping free up the pharmacist at retail. "As I commented in *Chain Drug Review's* recent pharmacy roundtable at NACDS TSE, pharmacists should not be counting prescriptions and being 'tethered to the bench.' We all want our pharmacists to be practicing at the top of their license. With that said, the better workflow products out there, whether at the store or central-fill level, have improved exponentially in streamlining mundane duties and improving the quality of dispensing. Whether it's

## Dunnhumby rolls out data technology arm

CHICAGO — Dunnhumby, a global leader in customer data science, recently announced the launch of dunnhumby Labs (dh Labs), an internal accelerator focused on bringing innovative technologies that expand and advance the company's product offerings in the global retail marketplace. The new business unit is led by Kyle Fugere, who also heads dunnhumby Ventures.

"As part of my role operating the venture capital fund, I have had the opportunity to work hand in hand, as a board member and as an advisor, with startups around the world," said Fugere. "Now, in my dual role leading dh Labs, I am working with the team to take the lessons learned from working with high-growth startups and applying them to our most promising innovations. The mission is to push our team members to think like a startup, to aggressively pursue big opportunities, and to accelerate their path to value creation."

"We are extremely proud to be empowering businesses everywhere to compete and thrive in the modern data-driven economy with our science, product and computational execution innovation," said David Jack, chief technology officer of dunnhumby. "I am delighted that we are able to build on the successes of our venture team investments through our new accelerator to develop our own startups."

The dh Labs team is currently working on a number of prod-

ucts to transform three areas of common challenges for retailers and brands, starting out with the "360 View of the Customer." To address this concern, HuYu is a B2C mobile app that sources behavioral, attitudinal and lifestyle data directly from verified customers, generating insights for retailers and brands to help them understand their customers' attitudes and behavior, and better respond to their needs.

Enabling a 360-degree view of the customer with platforms such as HuYu, dunnhumby can now deliver invaluable "rest of market" and "rest of basket" insights to retailers and consumer packaged goods companies.

To help tackle "speed-of-thought insights," the "One-Four" analytical engine rapidly calculates customer-based metrics, such as household penetration. Results are now available in just milliseconds that previously took minutes and hours to deliver. Speed-of-thought insight is increasingly important to retailers who are no longer willing to wait for answers to crucial questions.

And for "Automated Machine Learning," dh Evolve is an automated machine-learning platform focused on solving complex retail challenges, such as understanding customer churn and predicting propensity to purchase.

"The retail market is undergoing a massive transformation, and leaders need to look beyond the immediate horizon to be successful long term," said Fugere.

## Workflow tools and prepackaging are being enlisted to free up pharmacists.

Doyle Jensen, executive vice president of global business development at Innovation, notes that pharmacy has evolved into an omnichannel experience for today's consumer. "This multi-channel sales approach provides consumers with an integrated customer experience by which they can shop online or order their refills from a desktop or mobile device, or by telephone, or in a brick-and-mortar store, and the experience is seamless. Our new generation of consumers demands it. Thus, as technology providers, we need to address these demands and continue pushing to further evolve pharmacy as a finely tuned digital experience. We've provided consumers with myriad new tools for 'self-care,' but I believe the unveiling of newer and even more effective tools is just around the corner."

Jensen says Innovation's products are gaining popularity in the field. "If the recent NACDS Total Store Expo were a key indicator of how technology is trending, I'd say without hesitation that our High Volume Solu-

capabilities such as verifying prescriptions virtually or having self-calibrating dispensers for newly introduced generic medications, today's tools can either improve or remove steps and simplify the overall process. Prepackaging speaks for itself. When you can simply retrieve medications in unit-of-use packaging, it's easier and faster for every step all the way down the line," Jensen concludes.

"PBMs, GERS and DIR are anything but harmless acronyms. They're more like a three-headed monster that's trying its hardest to kill off independent pharmacies," says William Holmes, president and CEO of RxSafe. "Then there's the '800-pound gorilla' known as Amazon/PillPack, which is pushing large chains to up their game in terms of enhanced services and speedy delivery. In short, pharmacies have to compete with well-funded giants in the midst of a horrendous reimbursement climate," he adds.

Holmes points out that improved patient adherence, with

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# EagleForce tech simplifies medical record access

HERNDON, Va. — EagleForce Associates Inc. is an advanced technology development and consulting firm focused on leading and supporting clients with their most difficult challenges.

Two years ago, based on gaps EagleForce recognized within state Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs), the company created CRx Monitor, an opioid monitoring solution to help combat the growing epidemic.

This system requires no human intervention to access real-time transactions to support and enhance state PDMP solutions. EagleForce says its proven technology integrates with existing electronic medical records and pharmacy point-of-sale processing systems identifying all class II through class V controlled substances to automate prescription intake and screening; real-time processing and safeguarding against medication conflicts; duplicate prescriptions; and fraud and abuse potential.

The system is interoperable across all pharmacies, health care providers and health care systems throughout the nation without limitations across state borders.

Addressing opioid abuse was a seamless transition for EagleForce as it already had access to every medication available for human and animal consumption through its relationships with large pharmacy dispensers, such as Express Scripts, Walgreens, Rite Aid Corp., and others, along with an interoperable system that goes across state lines to alert directly into the pharmacy workflow.

Within its national opioids tracking solution, EagleForce is able to assess and flag potential or actual inappropriate use, abuse or diversion that could lead to overdose. Additionally, the company's five on-staff medical doctors drove the non-



Stanley Campbell

intrusive functionality that is designed to allow a prescriber the opportunity to interact directly with a patient for counseling, intervention and immediate referral for treatment.

The company's innovative approach uses a combination of systems, including algorithm-based technology, service-oriented architecture (SOA) based cloud computing methodology, wireless communications architectures, collective personal experiences, and a technology company portfolio of relationships.

EagleForce is recognized as a leading technology solutions company providing a broad range of eligibility systems development, organizational and operational assistance to "big data" processing, including interoperability, predictive analytics and IT functions.

EagleForce's pedigree was established within the intelligence, defense and homeland security sectors with work on TSA prescreening identity verification and in health care on work with NATO and the secure data sharing of electronic health records among member countries.

According to the company, EagleForce's evidence-based eligibility and real-time monitoring systems have been deployed to solve some of the biggest technology challenges,

including direct support to pharmaceutical manufacturers and pharmacies specific to the Federal Anti-Kickback Statute, which is a health care fraud and abuse statute that prohibits the exchange of remuneration for referrals for services that are payable by a federal program, which, in the context of health care providers, is Medicare.

"As the gold standard in the industry for elements of compliance," EagleForce says it helps its clients meet full compliance with antikickback and other statutory regulations. EagleForce products, the company says, reach every point-of-sale pharmacy throughout the 50 states and nine U.S. ter-

ritories, providing these benefits through the company's proprietary 250,000,000-person Master Patient Index SMART Registry.

***Virtually every pharmacy has a secure connection.***

The core of EagleForce technology is the Adjudicator and Real-Time Benefits Investigation (RTBI) solution, which provides real-time benefit eligibility solution for manufacturer and pharmacy coupon, co-pay,

and voucher programs and interrogates most commercial and all federal health plans.

This system is securely connected virtually to every health plan and pharmacy in the country, allowing for real-time processing of information, covered entity attestations and the ability to perform an audit in near real time.

Stanley Campbell, chief executive officer and chief technology officer of EagleForce Associates and EagleForce Health, has a background in physics and mathematics and is a former Navy pilot with more than eight patent submissions in the business, intelligence, security and health care arenas.

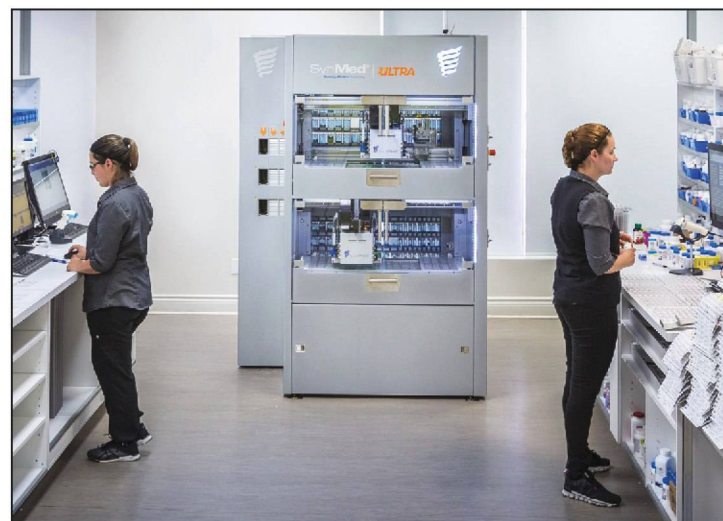
## Automated tasks speed up process

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the help of pharmacy automation, is part of the solution to the above problem. He says, "Med sync and adherence packaging can not only improve CMS [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services] Star Ratings and reduce DIR fees, but they can bring in new, profitable customers to your drug store. Because patients are adherent, they are healthier, and their near-perfect record on monthly refills is better for your bottom line. Our product, RapidPakRx, is the only strip packaging system designed specifically for retail pharmacies to complete a 30-day med cycle at the lowest possible cost. Just ask RapidPakRx owner Trey Crawford [C&C Drugs in Collins, Miss.]."

Holmes quotes Crawford: "What led me to the decision to buy an adherence packaging machine was the fact that we were looking at our synchronization program and noticing that people were not getting their medications on time. When we looked at our Star Ratings, we were seeing we were not where we wanted to be, and we saw adherence packaging as a way to get our adherence numbers where they should be. Now our Star Ratings have improved. I believe, with a few more people put on adherence packaging, that we'll be able to cross the finish line and be a five-star pharmacy."

Holmes says RxSafe is always pushing the envelope by introducing revolutionary technology at a fraction of the cost of competing systems. The company now has 54 domestic and international patents, and 14 applications pending. RxSafe plans to introduce two exciting products early next year.

"In the past two months, RxSafe has announced two new international distribution deals, opening up markets in the EU, United Kingdom, Israel, the Middle East and North Africa. Re-



The SynMed System automates blister filling.

cent U.S. health system installs include SCL Health, Memorial Sloan Kettering and Cambridge Health, plus more than 100 independent retail pharmacies so far this year."

Elsewhere, Parata Systems, a leading provider of pharmacy automation, including vial-filling, adherence packaging, and workflow and patient experience solutions, recently launched a new generation of its vial-filling robot, Max 2.

Improving pharmacy workflow helps alleviate medication errors that harm approximately 1.5 million people each year in the U.S. By automating the labeling, filling and capping of vials, the Parata Max 2 improves workflow and meets the demands of busy pharmacies across all settings. Max 2 contributes to reduced costs and medication errors by automating up to 80% of a pharmacy's oral solids with accuracy for drug and dose.

"Improving pharmacy workflow can directly increase patient safety," says Mark Longley, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Parata. "The enhancements we made in Max 2 are designed with the pharmacy's efficiency and accuracy top-of-mind."

On the software side, QS/1 recently partnered with Therigy, a trusted partner in specialty pharmacy software, consulting and outcomes, to improve specialty pharmacy operations between its dispensing system and therapy management software.

Ed Vess, QS/1's director of pharmacy professional affairs, says that specialty pharmacy is the fastest-growing area within the industry and can help pharmacies increase their patient base as well as diversify their business. He adds that the ability to tap into TherigySTM will help pharmacies simplify the patient care process to better serve and improve patient outcomes.

"Therigy is widely known for its patient-centric specialty therapy management technology. This partnership between our two organizations will give QS/1's pharmacy customers access to cutting-edge services, allowing them to automate, streamline and focus on patient management," Vess says.

TherigySTM technologies offer a range of resources that give pharmacists the tools required for detailed tracking of patient progress with specialty medications.

## GlobalWorx offers platform to chains

HENRICO, Va. — GlobalWorx, a collaboration platform for the store-level control of fast-moving consumer goods, is now offering its award-winning solution to retail drug companies. The GlobalWorx Communications Platform helps drug store retailers enhance supplier management, increase revenue and strengthen customer satisfaction by communicating out-of-stock situations and other store service-related issues.

"The GlobalWorx Communications Platform was designed by retailers and suppliers to help grow profitable sales. The system dramatically improves the management of store operations that continue to be increasingly complex and works to improve the out-of-stock issues that continue to plague drug store retailers," said Bill Lecznar, president and chief executive officer of GlobalWorx.

The Web-based GlobalWorx solution is a communication platform that's speedy to deploy and can easily connect retailers to their supplier partners. GlobalWorx makes it simple to communicate in real time out-of-stock opportunities and define business metrics that the entire industry can agree and rely on. The platform immediately alerts associates so issues can be quickly and accurately remediated at store level. Detecting issues in hours instead of days, the platform keeps all players supporting in-store activities in the know.