

*IN THEIR OWN WORDS*

**“WITH PHARMERICA  
AS A PARTNER, WE  
SPEND A LOT LESS TIME  
MANAGING PHARMACY  
AND A LOT MORE TIME  
PROVIDING CARE.”**

– Priscilla Dunn, vice president of clinical services, Cadence Healthcare Solutions



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# Small provider thinks big with key pharmacy solutions that improve quality and cut costs.

**C**adence Healthcare Solutions is a small long-term care provider that offers skilled and rehab services in Georgia and Oklahoma. As its name implies, the company is marching with precise rhythm to be a high quality provider. Doing so has required this small provider of just over 1,000 beds to think big by investing in clinical leadership and technology that not only will help it become competitive quickly, but also eventually gain an edge by being recognized as a preferred provider of high quality services, says Priscilla Dunn, vice president of clinical services.

Cadence has been on a fast track of continuous improvement, a primary reason for recruiting Dunn to lead its clinical services division in the fall of 2016. “Priscilla is a forward thinker and jumped right on board with the ideas we presented,” says Lisa Hockett-White, PharMerica’s new director of Nurse Consulting Services.

Dunn has been a key figure in Cadence’s carefully executed plans to re-invent itself and invigorate the company with well-respected industry veterans and clinical leaders. “Right out of the gate, Priscilla began utilizing PharMerica’s Nurse Consulting Services proactively.” Almost immediately, Dunn worked hard fostering partnerships between PharMerica’s consulting team and its physicians.

In some ways, Cadence’s ambitious mission could not have come at a better time as the industry wrestles with far-reaching regulatory changes, many of which are embedded in the precedent-setting “Mega Rule” that’s aimed at vastly improving the way medications are administered and managed. A huge part of

those efforts are underway in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ (CMS) mandate that providers do a better job in overseeing how psychotropic drugs are administered. Much of that comes from the nation’s current opioid addiction crisis.

Another key component of the Mega Rule is CMS’ mandate that all facilities take an active role in stemming the use of antibiotics, the overprescribing of which has led to multidrug resistance. Effective in November 2017, all long-term care providers are now required to develop and maintain an infection prevention and control program.

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PharMerica has been key in helping providers nationwide reach compliance in those efforts.

PharMerica’s Antibiotic Stewardship model addresses the core CDC program requirements, including facility leadership, accountability, antibiotic use policies, tracking tools and infection management guidelines.

The new federal guidelines, in fact, are the biggest challenge Cadence has yet faced. “PharMerica has rolled out a program to assist us with this, including training our facilities staff, policy and procedures and working with us to ensure all guidelines are met,” Dunn says. The Antibiotic Stewardship program also has saved money. “Without this program, a nurse would have to work up to 40 hours a month to keep us in compliance,” she adds.



In addition, PharMerica has helped Cadence meet CMS guidelines on psychotropic medication management with tools like gradual dose reduction reminders, lab test reminders, medication pass, expired medications and overall medication storage rules.

Along the way, Cadence also is working to take advantage of PharMerica’s industry-leading solutions geared toward helping providers contain pharmacy costs. Of particular help is the company’s solutions that help Cadence improve work flow and accuracy.

“With the help of PharMerica, reconciliation is easy,” Dunn says. “They have a 99.9% rate on delivery to our buildings.” Currently, Cadence faxes its pharmacy orders to PharMerica but beginning in 2018, it will earn additional discounts when it integrates with Point Click Care for its electronic records management.

“PharMerica also alerts us if we are using a high cost medication, so we can consult with the physician and lower our cost,” Dunn adds. “They really are the real deal when it comes to cost savings and assisting our facilities. I would not want to use anyone else. We have enough to do to manage our residents.”

Working with PharMerica’s Nurse Consulting Services has helped Cadence improve its clinical strength and quality – two central tenants of its long-term mission.

“The pharmacy consultants are great,” Dunn says. “They help us manage our medications, including all of the critical psychotropic medications.” Cadence nurses are able to tap into PharMerica’s portal to compare cost-saving medications prior to admission, and pull resident medication lists. “This is really

helping with our QAPI [quality assurance and performance improvement] efforts,” she adds.

As Dunn reflects on the progress Cadence has made, PharMerica has played a central role. And Cadence is committed to integrating as much as possible with PharMerica and leveraging all of the technology-based solutions it brings to the table.

“We spend considerably less time now managing our pharmacy with PharMerica as a partner,” she says. “That gives us more time to focus on our core mission of providing quality care.”

Trust and transparency are vital to every strategic partnership Cadence has. Both are front in center during PharMerica’s quarterly business reviews, which provide both partners with an opportunity to review mutual progress and discuss opportunities to improve in a frank and open forum.

“At the end of the day, our partnership with PharMerica definitely gives us an edge and sets us apart,” Dunn says. “PharMerica takes on such a critical role in helping us identify problems and along the way, saves us a great deal of money.”

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