

PharMerica's PropacPayless Brings Local

In David Welker's world, the importance of a long term care pharmacy partner begins with the relationship, the ability of the provider to trust that medications will be on time and in the right supply, and that any problems can be rectified in quick fashion.

As chief executive officer of Brookfield Health and Rehabilitation of Cascadia in Battleground, Wash., he has entrusted his residents and staff with just that partner, the PharMerica company PropacPayless.

Welker says since PharMerica acquired the Pacific Northwest pharmacy PropacPayless, his skilled nursing facility has benefited greatly from not only the speed and efficiency of their customer service, but also the localized attention from pharmacists and nurse consultants that is complemented by PharMerica's national scope and scale.

"This is the best relationship I have ever had with a pharmacy. The meds are on time, and we receive daily invoices showing really low costs," Welker says. Still, beyond the bottom line there is the consistency of the PharMerica team that in normal times is visible in the

facility, and now, during the pandemic, just a virtual visit away.

"It is so helpful to first and foremost know who the sales rep is and the nursing rep. Tons of things come up and usually late at night or after hours, and they respond immediately to emails and texts," he says. "Other companies may get back to you the next day and it is too late. I really enjoy the response I get from our PharMerica team."

As in most businesses, the continuity is vital as is the expertise. "We get emails from actual pharmacists. It is so nice to have them on our side; it feels like they have a significant role in our fight to provide top-quality resident care."

OREGON PROVIDER LIKES THE 'PERSONAL'

Nearby in the same Pacific Northwest region is where Andrew Becker, vice president of operations, Sapphire Health Services in Portland, Ore., tells his own story of how PharMerica's PropacPayless has kept pace with his growing business.

A regional group that now has 20 facilities covering the full slate of senior care settings, Becker says the personal ties forged between the PharMerica consultants based in the same communities in which he operates have made all the difference.

Naming the consultants by first names, he says knowing who they are and for many years is a key part of the top-notch customer service that Sapphire's nursing centers receive.

"We really have grown to appreciate the customer service and what they do for us. I mean you can pick up the phone and get an immediate response. It is the small things even, like when we had a pill crusher break. We asked if they could help, and they said they would be right out with a new one," Becker says.

The nursing staff, he jokes, have become spoiled by the attention PharMerica's



Focus Aligned With National Presence



David Welker



Andrew Becker

nursing consultants pay the facility. Medication carts are checked and supported without fail.

“When PharMerica acquired PropacPayless, I was worried that some of the local touch would not be there anymore, and I have been more than pleasantly surprised to realize those things that I really loved have not changed. John [PharMerica rep] is still roaming the halls and checking out the carts, and Paul or Judy are there to help on pricing...”

And, when there is a tough client, the first step his team takes is to call the PharMerica consultant pharmacist and do a drug regime review to see if there is something missing that could help the resident. “Hopefully, we can get it resolved and at least move in the right direction to help our residents to get a better outcome.”

NATIONAL SCOPE

The company, Becker says, truly has a national footprint with a local focus. An example is the way in which information on the COVID-19 pandemic has flowed nonstop from PharMerica, with national and state regulations and rule changes being communicated quickly and ahead of the curve.

And, the actual way in which PharMerica worked with the provider changed fast and seemingly without effort, he says.

“They jumped right in and adapted when the pandemic hit. This shows how their national presence helps. There might be a lag in certain areas of the country with the rollout of a pandemic response, but a company like PharMerica with a national footprint can move some of those agendas quicker than others,” Becker says.

This was seen with the move from in-person to virtual visits and updates, which have proven to be very valuable in ways unforeseen before the pandemic.

“At times it was hard to have the time for a nurse to do a training in-person, but now with Zoom and other virtual methods, we can record a training and use it anytime,” he says.

Other PharMerica changes included using cardboard boxes for medication shipments as the regular totes could be an infection control issue as they were moved from facility to facility. “A lot of things had to change and had to be done quickly and seamlessly. The cardboard versus tote might not seem like a big deal, but it makes a big difference,” he says.

IT IS A BIG DEAL

In the end, Cascadia’s Welker says there are many components in building a high-quality care operation to serve the needs of the elderly and those with disabilities who make up a nursing facility. It is with PharMerica, he says, that the pharmacy component of this quest is satisfied.

“It really plays to our ability to be a Five-Star facility. All cylinders have to fire to get to that level, you cannot be lacking in any one area, and PharMerica is one of the reasons why we are the highest-rated nursing home in Clark County,” he says.

“People are happy with the service they are getting, and if the pharmacy was failing, they would not be happy with their stay here. It is a really big piece of what we do,” Welker says. “We may not have the fact PharMerica is our pharmacy partner out on a banner out front, but it is a big deal.”