

# The Vantage® FORUM



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A Partnership of Community Hospitals for Quality Health Care Services

## Care Apothecary Serves Institutional Pharmacy Needs with Expert Staff and Excellent Customer Service

By John Fries

Years ago, when you needed a prescription filled, you walked down to the corner drugstore to place your order. The pharmacist, also called an apothecary, would ask how your family was doing, then dispense the needed medications along with helpful advice.

Corner drugstores still exist in some places, but the world has changed. Most supermarkets and big box retailers have in-store pharmacies. However, as the nation's geriatric population grows--and nursing homes, assisted living residences and other institutions continue to open to provide care for them--there's an increasing focus on their pharmaceutical needs. It's been estimated that seniors generate an annual \$43 billion in prescription costs, and projections are that prescription use will increase by 35 percent by 2010. That will equate to 38.5 prescriptions a year per patient. Medication management among the geriatric population has become more complex than ever, placing seniors at an ever-increasing risk for medication-related problems.

***The pharmacy provides its client facilities with consultations to assist them in regulation compliance, staff education, and bottom-line savings.***

Vantage Holding Company, LLC expertly provides for the pharmaceutical needs of the aging population through Care Apothecary, now part of Vantage. Care Apothecary is the LTC (Long Term Care) closed-door, institutional pharmacy, located in Meadville, serving about 40 senior-focused facilities across Western Pennsylvania. They include several long-term care facilities and nursing homes, along with such other institutions as mental health/mental retardation facilities, drug and alcohol abuse centers and a correctional facility.

"Care Apothecary has been in place for 27 years," said Kathy Hyde, LPN. She is one of several staff members who provide individualized customer service to the institutions served by the pharmacy.



Care Apothecary Meadville Facility.

Care Apothecary's staff members are experts with extensive experience who thoroughly understand the medical needs of these institutions. The pharmacy features a clinical program directed by practitioners who are certified in gerontology. The Vice President of LTC Operations, Robin Smith, Pharm.D., CGP, FASCP, leads the staff, which includes nurses, pharmacists

and technicians. They operate as an extended member of the health care team, with a focus on education and superior customer service.

Hyde said "Care Apothecary possesses the wide range of specialized capabilities needed for effective, efficient interaction with the institutions it serves. We have the infrastructure to maintain the necessary paperwork, as well as medical administration and treatment records to keep them within regulations. Also, the pharmacy operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We get prescription orders during all hours of the day and night and often, they're needed quickly--so, being open around the clock is vital."

The pharmacy provides its client facilities with consultations to assist them in regulation compliance, staff education, and bottom-line savings. Services that add value include professional pharmacy and nursing support, in-services, medication-pass audits, medication room inspections, IV therapy with pre-mixed solutions, geriatric specialized formulary development, and customized ancillary services.

Recently, four of Care Apothecary's pharmacy technicians received national certification after passing a certification exam administered by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) and governed by five organizations, including the American Society of Health System Pharmacists (ASHP) and the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP). The exam encompasses all areas of pharmacy, including institutional, retail and the home setting. The newly certified technicians must maintain their certification by completing 20 continuing education credits every two years. By doing this, they are exceeding expectations, since the state of Pennsylvania does not currently require certification for pharmacy technicians. The certification elevates Care Apothecary's already excellent standards, while recognizing the valuable knowledge possessed by its technicians.

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Care Apothecary continues to expand services and explore new ways to better serve the needs of its customers. With quality, customer service and cost savings that are second to none, the pharmacy enthusiastically looks toward the future.

Kathy Hyde added that interested people may contact the pharmacy at any time to arrange an on-site tour. Please call Kathy toll free at 1-800-832-0291 for more information. Also for information on Care Apothecary and other Vantage Companies, e-mail your requests to [tomsurman@vantage-healthcare.com](mailto:tomsurman@vantage-healthcare.com).



Kathy Hyde - LPN, Nurse Liaison, Kami Packard - CPht, Crystal Quail CPht, Nancy Miller CPht, Denise Valentine CPht, and Robin Garner PharmD, CGP, FASCP and Vice President of LTC operations.

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