Community pharmacy fills gaps in access and affordability for patients, payers

A special report by Drug Store News Group
Have you toured one in yours?

Please contact NACDS’ Heidi Ecker at (703) 837-4121 or hecker@nacds.org.

• Pharmacy services improve healthcare affordability.
• Widely trusted and accessible, pharmacists are extremely valued by those in
• Innovative pharmacy services do even more to improve patient health and quality
• Pharmacies help patients use medicines safely and stay healthy

see and take away insights about how:
Through an NACDS RxIMPACT Pharmacy Tour, you will see what your constituents
care power of community pharmacies.

One of America’s most intractable challenges is the staggering cost of health care. One vital but under-
utilized resource that could help break the cost cycle is the nation’s nearly 62,000

community pharmacies.

Pharmacists provide a wealth of patient care services beyond prescription dispensing and
basic counseling. They prevent health conditions from spiraling out of control, they catch
dangerous diseases in their early stages and help patients manage chronic diseases and
complex medication regimens.

Pharmacists increasingly are providing immunizations and vaccinations — a role most
could not fill five to six years ago. According to one study, immunization programs conducted in
a pharmacy setting versus a physician’s office
save an average of about $31 per patient.

Each year, the United States spends about $300 billion due to patients not taking their
medications as prescribed. Research from CVS Caremark has shown that patients with chronic
diseases who take their medications correctly save about $7,800 per patient. Yet
about half of these patients will stop taking their medications within a year.

Medication therapy management — where pharmacists work closely with patients to ensure
they take their medications correctly — is returning
about $12 in savings for every $1 invested in it.

It’s not just about reducing the cost of drugs, it’s the role the community pharmacist can play in
helping reduce total healthcare spending.

This report offers a close-up look at the health contributions provided by nearly 40 pharmacy

companies across the United States, and the solutions that are possible when pharmacists are em-
powered to practice at the top of the profession.

Editor’s note: In addition to the companies that appear in this report, Drug Store News would like to acknowledge the following companies for partici-
pating in NACDS RxImpact Day 2014, including: Astrop Drug, Kinney Drugs, Marsh Supermarkets,
Nacarro Discount Pharmacies, Red Cross Pharmacy and Ritzman Pharmacies.

Pharmacy Profiles

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Ahold dietitians capture intersection of grocery, Rx

For Dutch-based Royal Ahold’s U.S. retail banners — which include Stop & Shop in the Northeast, Giant Food Stores of Carlisle, Pa., and Giant Food of Landover, Md. — the pharmacy and the health-and-wellness services its pharmacists provide are a prime focus of the company’s total retail offering and a key to Ahold’s reputation for high-service, one-stop shopping.

Ahold’s more than 565 food-drug combo stores promote the critically important intersection of healthy food and pharmacy. The company has been effective at exploring the links between pharmacist counseling and medicines in the prescription department, and the nutritional counseling and healthy eating offerings provided in the food aisles, along with the dietitians who staff some of its stores. Both, say its leaders, are key to good health.

Nutritionists are encouraged to refer customers to the store pharmacist for advice, and vice versa. Increasingly, pharmacists at Stop & Shop and other Ahold outlets also are encouraged to step out from behind the counter to help customers find the right OTC product or to meet with the store’s dietitian, if available. The company also has allied with Unilever to sponsor in-store clinic programs and with Quaker Oats to promote oatmeal as a way to lower cholesterol.

Last year, Ahold launched a new campaign to promote stronger relationships between pharmacists and their patients. The program, called “ACT” for “Acknowledge, Coach and Thank,” is designed to encourage pharmacists to “take a more active, deliberate role in communicating with our patients” and “adopt an ownership mentality and make each customer feel important and appreciated,” said Andrew Markievich, manager of pharmacy clinical programs for Ahold USA.

Reunited Albertsons expands wellness offerings

Albertsons is back.

The storied supermarket banner is flying over a reunited retail network that stretches across the western and southwestern United States and throughout Florida in the Southeast. Combined with its sister company, New Albertson’s Inc., the two companies command a retail grocery and drug store empire that extends across much of the Midwest and into the Northeast and New England states.

Besides Albertsons, that network includes respected supermarket and pharmacy brands like Jewel-Osco supermarkets and Osco drug stores in the Midwest, Shaw’s and Star Market in New England, and Acme Markets in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. All those divisions operate within New Albertson’s, acquired last year from Supervalu by Cerberus Capital Management, which had already purchased much of the Albertsons empire.

The subsequent re-integration of the remaining Albertsons stores that also came with last year’s deal with Supervalu continues to expand and revitalize one of the nation’s largest and most innovative pharmacy providers. “New Albertson’s Inc., which operates pharmacies in Jewel-Osco, Acme Markets and Shaw’s/Star Markets, and Albertson’s LLC, which operates Albertsons LLC and New Albertson’s Inc. run a retail grocery and drug store empire that extends across much of the United States.

Albertson’s-Osco and Albertson’s-Sav-On pharmacies, together operate a total of 811 pharmacies across the country. Both companies have worked with local partners to also offer 16 in-store clinics,” said spokeswoman Christine Wilcox.

Those pharmacies “offer a full menu of health-and-wellness services,” Wilcox said, through “both group programs [and] private one-on-one appointments. We also have a core of specially trained Wellness Pharmacists to offer a comprehensive menu of services to help patients better manage their chronic conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma and more.”

Continued on page 20

Bartell Drugs provides affordable lab tests

With the influx of new patients under the Affordable Care Act, an important function of retail pharmacies will be to provide some of the services that patients traditionally associate with primary care physicians in order to alleviate the pressure on doctors and on hospital emergency rooms.

One area in which Seattle-based Bartell Drugs is helping is cholesterol and blood-sugar testing.

Bartell director of pharmacy operations and clinical services Billy Chow told DSN that lab testing can cost up to $125, but in a retail pharmacy setting, that price can dip to between $15 and $20. The main barrier, he said, is letting patients know. “One of the challenges is visibility,” Chow said. “People don’t realize they can go to a community pharmacy.” For that reason, the chain has embarked on training its pharmacists in cholesterol, A1C and blood-glucose testing.

Bartell also has recently launched a retail clinic program under a partnership with Group Health Cooperative. Under the program, dubbed CareClinic and launched in December, Group Health nurse practitioners provide treat...

Bi-Lo/Winn-Dixie make health convenient in Southeast

Ask consumers in the Southeast to name their grocery outlet, and two supermarket brands are sure to come up: Bi-Lo and Winn-Dixie. Many of those consumers also will cite either chain as their source for prescriptions, preventive health services and nutritional advice.

Both Bi-Lo and Winn-Dixie are owned by Greenville, S.C.-based Bi-Lo Holdings. Together, they comprise the nation’s ninth-largest supermarket chain by sales volume, with 684 stores in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. But Bi-Lo also fields 482 full-service pharmacies in Bi-Lo and Winn-Dixie stores.

In February, Bi-Lo took a big step toward boosting patients’ adherence to their medication regimens with the launch of “Refill Sync,” an opt-in program that synchronizes customers’ maintenance medication prescriptions so that all scripts...
Cardinal brings ‘coordination, efficiency’ to health care

In a sweeping transformation, drug wholesale and health services giant Cardinal Health is aligning its massive distribution and service network to meet the needs of a shifting healthcare system desperately in need of new solutions.

“This is an extraordinary time in health care,” said Cardinal chairman and CEO George Barrett. “We see care becoming more coordinated, delivered in more cost-effective settings and driven by incentives increasingly linked to outcomes, rather than activities.”

What’s more, he said, “we are in the early stages of an unprecedented demographic wave, which is bringing nearly 10,000 people per day to eligibility age for Medicare.”

Cardinal, he said, “will use our scale, our broad reach across the system and our portfolio of services and products to help bring coordination and efficiency” to the nation’s changing health system.

As a healthcare entity, Cardinal operates on a massive scale. The company provides pharmaceuticals and medical products and services to more than 100,000 locations every day, including nearly 8,000 independent retail pharmacies and roughly 10,000 chain pharmacies, as well as thousands of hospital and clinic

Preventive services make Costco health destination

Warehouse club store giant Costco Wholesale has exploded in size and reach to become the nation’s fourth-largest retailer. But along with its growth as a club store powerhouse, Costco has steadily expanded patient care services and become a health-and-wellness destination for millions of Americans.

The company’s reach as a one-stop destination for health products and services — some of them free and most of the rest priced at steep discounts in keeping with the company’s legendary low-price mission — can hardly be overstated. In the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2013, Costco operated 565 in-store pharmacies, employing some 2,000 pharmacists — up from 544 the previous year — as well as 614 optical centers and 469 hearing aid centers within its huge warehouse stores. Serving a membership base that now comprises 40 million households and more than 72 million cardholders, Costco pharmacists filled 38 million prescriptions last year and provided an expanding battery of preventive care services.

Among them: an adult immunization program, delivered by pharmacists on a walk-in basis, with flu shots going for just $14.99. Costco pharmacists also offer free periodic health screenings for a variety of conditions, including bone disease, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

“Our osteoporosis screening uses ultrasound technology to assess one’s risk for this condition,” the company reported. “Our healthy heart screenings offer a risk assessment for heart disease, a lipid-stick profile test and a blood-pressure check. Our lung health screening uses a spirometer to identify those at risk of COPD at the pre-symptomatic stage.”

On its pharmacy website, Costco provides guidance on the changes wrought by the Affordable Care Act for patients looking for health coverage. Indeed, the company offers a trove of healthy eating habits.

Consumer health ‘a vital responsibility’ for Delhaize

Any pharmacist working for one of Delhaize America’s supermarket chains from Maine to Florida knows that good health depends not only on the medication therapy and clinical services they provide in the pharmacy, but also on the nutritional advice and healthy eating choices their patients make in the food aisles. Delhaize employs more than 107,000 associates and operates 1,514 supermarkets in 16 eastern and southern states under several regional banners. The largest are Salisbury, N.C.-based Food Lion, which operates more than 1,100 supermarkets and 39 in-store pharmacies; and Hannaford, based in Scarborough, Maine, which serves New England and New York state with 180 stores, some 140 of which include pharmacies.

Those pharmacies are aligned with the company’s holistic approach to its customers’ overall health through such programs as Guiding Stars, a nutrition navigation system that helps customers find healthier foods throughout the store.

“Health across all our markets is a vital element of our responsibility,” the company reported. “Our skilled pharmacists do more than just fill prescriptions. They counsel patients on the proper use of medication and provide information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.”

Delhaize encourages its pharmacists to work in partnership with its staff of nutritionists and dietitians to boost customers’ healthy eating habits.

Pharmacists in the company’s Hannaford stores exemplify that approach. “Because they’re located within a supermarket, Hannaford pharmacies have a unique advantage when it comes to offering help in managing your health conditions,” the company tells customers. “Our pharmacists not only help you with prescription and over-the-counter medications, they also can help put you in touch with our staff of nutritionists and registered dietitians.”

“Together, they can provide nutrition information that may affect medications you’re taking, and give helpful advice on vita-

CVS’ hybrid structure creates unique patient care solutions

With its unique hybrid structure and its ability to leverage the three core parts of its business — part big retail pharmacy chain, part big pharmacy benefit manager, part big retail clinic operator — CVS Caremark is using behavioral economics and predictive analytics to create an innovative array of programs and services that align effectively with the long-term trends in health care.

Indeed, one area in which the company remains laser-focused is improving medication adherence. The cost of people not taking their medications as they are prescribed is a $300 billion drain on the U.S. healthcare system.

Enter Pharmacy Advisor. The flagship program is driven by the fact that face-to-face counseling between pharmacists and patients can be two to three times more effective as other forms of communication in driving adherence to prescription drug regimens. The condition-based program, which was first introduced in 2011 for diabetes only, alerts pharmacists when patients are not adherent to their medications or when there is a gap in care — for instance, when a patient has missed a critical biometric screening that could impact their drug therapy — and enables them to communicate and intervene with patients in real time.

Since then, Pharmacy Advisor has been expanded to nine other chronic diseases, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, asthma, breast cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, depression and osteoporosis. In 2013, CVS Caremark had 16 million patient lives on Pharmacy Advisor. The program has been shown to increase adherence rates up to 3.9%, with a return of $3 in savings for every $1

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Discount Drug Mart: Loyalty via service, convenience

In many parts of Ohio, a trip to Discount Drug Mart — most of its fiercely loyal customers just call it “Drug Mart” — is a shopping ritual that takes place like clockwork several times a month. Drug Mart’s 72 stores — and the pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other employees who staff them — are as firmly fixed in the life of their communities as the local youth league baseball diamonds.

Not bad for a chain that opened its first store just 45 years ago. Medina, Ohio-based Drug Mart is a tribute to one-stop shopping — its drug stores are packed with everything from medicines to hardware. But Buckeye State residents are as likely to seek out the wellness counseling of the stores’ pharmacists as they are to stock up on hammers, laundry detergent or fresh fruits and vegetables.

Indeed, the company owes its success and legendary ability to draw generations of Ohio customers as much to its role as a trusted local health provider as to its one-stop convenience and competitive prices. Signaling the company’s determination to remain at its core a community health resource, pharmacist, founder and CEO Parviz Boodjeh continued for years to serve patients one day each week at one of the pharmacies so he wouldn’t lose touch with patients or medication issues.

Drug Mart now fills more than 4.5 million prescriptions a year. Its pharmacists provide a wide range of services to make it easier for patients to stay well and adhere to their medication therapy.

Among those services: immunizations for several conditions; a new “Sync Your Meds” program that allows patients to refill all their prescriptions at the same time each month; automatic prescription refills; and generic prescriptions for as little as $1.99.

Also popular with Ohioans are such programs as Senior Savings Day each Wednesday, the company’s “Health Buzz” newsletter featuring the latest health research and medical insights, and a free $5 gift card for uninsured patients who sign up for a flu shot.

In the early days of Fruth Pharmacy, at its first store in Point Pleasant, W.Va., pharmacist and company founder Jack Fruth used to post a sign on the door after closing time: “In case of emergency, call Jack Fruth at home.”

The founder’s “desire to serve the community,” noted a company report, “was evident not only in his willingness to come out in the middle of the night, but also with his involvement with local projects like the founding of Point Pleasant Valley Hospital.”

Indeed, Fruth’s level of commitment to the care of his neighbors distinguished the company he established as an above-and-beyond drug store retailer, and it continues to shape the culture of this formidable regional pharmacy chain. Since 1952, Point Pleasant, W.Va.-based Fruth Pharmacy has meant “hometown family pharmacy,” by its own description, to generations of Americans in West Virginia and Ohio.

Over those decades, the company has expanded to 26 stores. But Fruth remains, “first and foremost, a family business,” according to a spokesperson, “a full-service pharmacy and retail store with a down-home touch.”

That “touch” extends to services like prescription delivery from all stores to patients’ homes, drug compounding and pharmacists who go to extra lengths to counsel their patients.

Genoa programs enforce medication adherence

Compliance is an important pharmacy issue for all patients, but for patients in the mental health and addictions community, compliance is critical. “A one day late in medication can be a crisis for these patients,” said Dale Masten, director of government affairs at Genoa Healthcare. “That’s why it’s so important for us to be on-site as part of the healthcare team. Patients can have transportation issues, so having access to their mental health provider and pharmacist in the same location can improve outcomes.”

Unlike traditional retail pharmacies, the Mercer Island, Tukwila-based company’s 122 pharmacies in 27 states and the District of Columbia are “closed door” pharmacies located on-site at partner behavioral health clinics and open to the clinics’ patients.

“We strive to have a medication possession rate as close to 1% as possible, meaning patients are taking their medications as prescribed,” Masten said. “We work hard to ensure that patients always have access to their medication since a one-day lapse can increase the risk of hospitalization. We’re committed to helping consumers stay on their medication by providing the support necessary to make that happen.”

Refill reminder calls are always made by a person who can respond to patient questions and help if patients aren’t following their medication schedule. “If it’s time for a patient’s refill and the patient has 12 pills left, we know something’s wrong, and we can walk down the hall and speak to the patient’s physician,” Masten said.

Genoa developed a specialized perforated, color-coded, multi-medication adherence packaging system for individuals living with severe and persistent mental illness. One pack represents a seven day medication supply and lists each medication and when it should be taken. The company offers a variety of other packaging to help optimize ease-of-use and increase the rate of compliance, along with many other services focused on improving adherence and outcomes for patients.

Good Neighbor wins customers’ loyalty

Once again in 2013, Good Neighbor Pharmacy ranked highest in overall customer satisfaction among chain drug stores in the annual J.D. Power U.S. National Pharmacy Study. That makes the third time the big national pharmacy network proved tops in customer loyalty since J.D. Power launched the consumer survey — GNP was previously awarded the honor in 2010 and tied for the recognition in 2011.

Clearly, Americans embrace the kind of personalized, professional care and attention they get from the more than 3,200 independent pharmacy owner-operators who carry the Good Neighbor logo. “The support of GNP’s pharmacy independent pharmacy owner-operators, our company’s philosophy, and our ability to provide a local, personal service have helped us maintain our strong position in the market,” said Chrissy Lane, director of brand management for the chain.

More health-and-wellness initiatives are on the way. “In 2014, Good Neighbor Pharmacy is developing a new wellness platform that will incorporate all of our existing patient care services,” Lane said, “along with some new initiatives that will be important pharmacy measures based on changes in health care, such as the Affordable Care Act, Star Ratings (i.e., a health quality improvement initiative and rating system from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) and a movement toward outcomes-based pharmacy. We are also putting medication adherence at the forefront of our program as one of the most important priorities that is current in health care today.”

Good Neighbor Pharmacy services range from immunizations to its Diabetes Shoppe, obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, and asthma patients; Diabetes Shoppe; and home healthcare products and services,” said Chrissy Lane, director of brand management for the chain.

SourceBergen, independent pharmacists “play a vital role in their patients’ health care,” said Scott Robinson, group VP of Good Neighbor Pharmacy. “We are proud to support them in providing an unmatched level of personalized care through our valuable services, such as our immunization program and Prescription Savings Club.”

Longtime Good Neighbor Pharmacy member Roger Accardi, owner of Accardi Clinical Pharmacy in Orange City, Fla., explained his store’s appeal this way: “We know our patients by name; they’re not just a number. We are good neighbors, and we, as community pharmacists, practice pharmacy the way it was meant to be practiced.”

GNP’s 3,200-plus member drug stores serve thousands of communities coast to coast, providing “a variety of patient care services, ranging from flu shots and immunizations, including a travel health program; a respiratory therapy program for chronic
Hi-School Pharmacy Services is dedicated to providing pharmacy services in small, rural communities in Washington and Oregon. “In many of the locations in which we operate, we are the only pharmacy provider for the community,” said Jack Holt, president of Hi-School Pharmacy Services. The chain currently operates 31 stores and considers an additional seven stores as affiliates. “We anticipate growth this coming year between five and 10 additional stores, either through new store openings and/or additional affiliate stores joining our organization,” Holt said.

Holt said the chain is always looking for ways to improve the pharmacy experience for its customers. This year, Hi-School will remodel between four and five stores to upgrade existing, counseling areas. The chain also will test new store design concepts. Sometimes that means integrating other retail categories into its stores to better serve their communities. “In several of our locations, we have combined the pharmacy/variety store we operate with an ACE Hardware component to make us more of a one-stop shopping experience,” Holt said.

Hi-School prides itself as “America’s second-oldest continuously operated family drug chain,” in business since 1904. The Dubuque, Iowa-based firm operates 16 traditional pharmacies and two long-term care pharmacies in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin.

“A ‘HomeTown’ resource for Michigan health care

A ‘whole’ that’s more than the sum of its parts. That could describe Newaygo, Mich.-based HomeTown Pharmacy, a closely allied network of 16 independently owned drug stores in Michigan that combines the buying clout and sophisticated data management of a retail chain with the deep “hometown” roots of a mom-and-pop pharmacy. The goal to “bring together the personalized service of independently owned ... pharmacies with the bargaining power and efficiencies of a larger corporation,” the company said. “Our pharmacies offer compounding, prescription services, medication counseling, blood-pressure checks, flu clinics, shingles vaccinations, flu shots, pneumonia vaccinations, prescription delivery and durable medical equipment.”

It’s no accident that HomeTown blends small-town personal service and big-chain operating expertise. Founders Tim and Fred Grice began their pharmacy careers working for a national drug store chain before launching HomeTown in 1996. Says a company report, “Both brothers came to realize the necessity of growth for future survival and the importance of patient-driven community pharmacy.”

The concept took firm root in Michigan and attracted a still-growing network of independent owner-operators that now spans the entire state. The wide range of preventive care services offered by HomeTown pharmacists also has spawned new community health initiatives and collaborative care agreements as patients and health systems seek alternate-site care solutions in the face of a growing shortage of primary care physicians.

Among them: a pilot project to determine the cost-effectiveness and patient acceptance of rapid diagnostic testing in community pharmacies. Participating HomeTown pharmacists were certified by the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Pharmacy and Ferris State University to provide free influenza and strep throat diagnosis and treatment to eligible patients, under physician-developed protocols.

Jeff Stull, HomeTown’s pharmacy development manager, said, “We are not trying to compete with physician-based practices, as we are still referring the sickest of patients to their local physicians, but we do feel that our pharmacists can provide quality care that is accessible and more convenient.”

H-E-B offers Texas-sized wellness platform

“We want to be known as the premier healthcare provider in Texas, recognizing H-E-B as a total wellness destination,” said Craig Norman, senior VP pharmacy for San Antonio-based supermarket pharmacy powerhouse H-E-B. That statement sums up the company’s determination to be the Lone Star State’s go-to resource both for accessible front-line health services and on “neat, clean stores, which carry a traditional drug store mix at exceptional prices,” and you have the making of success over more than a century of service.

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H-E-B offers free blood-pressure and glucose tests on the second Saturday of every month.

“That’s our big consumer outreach,” Norman said. And the second Saturday screenings have become more of a total store event on those days … [with] healthy product demonstrations and other activities in the store to promote health and wellness … during those events.”

In its pharmacies, Norman said, “the cornerstone of our professional service offerings is our immunization program, CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Hi-School thrives on community care, personal service

“‘Encompasses pharmacy and the rest of the store,’ including counseling on healthy food choices by dietitians and nutritionists, along with “education we provide online, and of course a lot of programs in pharmacy.”

With 235 supermarket pharmacies across Texas, H-E-B is known almost as much for its preventive health and nutritional efforts as for its role as the state’s leading supermarket. What’s more, the chain is a leading innovator at tying its pharmacy care efforts together with its healthy eating educational programs.

H-E-B’s famed Second Saturdays program exemplifies its ability to integrate food and pharmacy. “We provide screenings to the public in every pharmacy, the second Saturday of every month,” Norman said, with free testing for blood pressure and glucose levels, and additional screenings offered for a full lipid profile and other tests for a fee.

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Hartig’s primary role, said its top manager is “providing affordable, accessible health care and vital medicines to members of the community. But we also believe that it is our responsibility to contribute more than simply access to a pharmacy or healthcare service.”

That responsibility extends to civic life, Hartig said. “Whether it’s the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, the local schools or any number of excellent community organizations, Hartig Drug is … supporting our community with volunteers, financial resources and most of all, a community conscience,” he said.

In line with that commitment, Hartig became “one of the first retail chains in the country to implement prescription vial recycling” in 2013, the company reported. “This program will allow patients and customers to safely and confidentially recycle empty prescription medication vials.”

That includes “any empty prescription container from any pharmacy,” Hartig noted.

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“To us, customer service is more than lip service; it’s a culture,” the company said. “The men and women of Hartig Drug welcome our customers into our places of business as if they were family.”

Hartig’s primary role, said its top manager is “providing affordable, accessible health care and vital medicines to members of the community. But we also believe that it is our responsibility to contribute more than simply access to a pharmacy or healthcare service.”

That responsibility extends to civic life, Hartig said. “Whether it’s the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, the local schools or any number of excellent community organizations, Hartig Drug is … supporting our community with volunteers, financial resources and most of all, a community conscience,” he said.

In line with that commitment, Hartig became “one of the first retail chains in the country to implement prescription vial recycling” in 2013, the company reported. “This program will allow patients and customers to safely and confidentially recycle empty prescription medication vials.”

That includes “any empty prescription container from any pharmacy,” Hartig noted.
Hy-Vee builds loyalty with high-touch care

To Midwesterners, Hy-Vee means more than groceries. The chain is familiar both as one of the region’s premier supermarket operators, and as a center for health services ranging from prescription counseling to high-touch clinical care.

West Des Moines, Iowa-based Hy-Vee employs more than 900 pharmacists and operates 245 in-store and stand-alone pharmacies — two more will open in April — in eight contiguous states. That total includes a specialty pharmacy, a compounding center, a high-volume central-fill prescription facility and 16 health clinic pharmacies.

Its pharmacists and clinicians provide health-and-wellness services, including medication therapy management, on-site screenings, immunizations, medication reviews and counseling by certified diabetes educators and nutritionists.

Those efforts have generated stellar customer satisfaction levels. Surveys suggest 92% of Hy-Vee’s pharmacy customers are “satisfied or very satisfied,” which it calls “the highest pharmacy satisfaction rate in the Midwest.”

The chain’s commitment to wellness extends beyond the pharmacy. Hy-Vee employs more than 200 dietitians — making it the nation’s third-largest employer of nutritionists — who help guide consumers through the food choices in its supermarkets, both through educational store tours and personalized nutrition counseling.

“Hy-Vee dietitians … develop personal nutrition plans to combat heart disease, diabetes and other health issues,” the company reported.

Hy-Vee also contracts with local employers to provide biometric screenings, medical nutrition therapy in coordination with other clinicians, a healthy lifestyle management program and other services for their employees.

The company’s leap into specialty and biotech pharmacy came through acquiring specialty provider Amber Pharmacy in February. “We were seeing customers … with specialty prescriptions that our pharmacies … didn’t have the staffing or depth of knowledge to administer,” said VP pharmacy Bob Engeland. Now, he said, “we tell every customer we can help with their specialty needs.”

The goal is “to help reduce the stress associated with chronic illnesses and ensure the focus remains on the patient’s well-being … with condition-specific programs and resources that promote greater adherence to prescribed therapies, improved health and faster recovery.”

Med sync boosts patient outreach at Klingensmith’s

In June 2013, a team from Klingensmith’s Drug Stores traveled from the chain’s rural western Pennsylvania base to Minnesota to learn from another mostly rural chain, Thrifty White Pharmacy, from the chain’s rural western Pennsylvania base to Minnesota to Maryland.

In addition to its popularity with patients, the program has won the favor of physicians because for them, it means fewer calls from the pharmacies requesting refills and thus less time spent on clerical work.

Lovelace expands the web of care in New Mexico

For generations of New Mexico residents, comprehensive health care has meant Lovelace Health System. The big hospital and pharmacy network provides state-of-the-art care through six major health centers, including its Albuquerque, N.M.-based flagship, Lovelace Medical Center Heart Hospital of New Mexico, and the state’s only hospital dedicated to women’s health.

But Lovelace also reaches patients through 13 outpatient pharmacies in and around Albuquerque, Rio Rancho and Santa Fe, as well as a specialty pharmacy to serve patients with serious chronic conditions. The care provided by these pharmacies is closely coordinated with Lovelace network hospitals and physicians.

“Our pharmacists focus on empowering health outcomes for our patients and working closely with providers in helping patients with their medication needs,” explained Lovelace Pharmacy CEO Brad Trom.

This year, Lovelace pharmacies will fill more than 800,000 prescriptions. Some of its stores also provide drug compounding and a free prescription delivery service.

In addition to in-store flu shots and on-site employee vaccinations, Lovelace pharmacists also provide shingles, hepatitis, tetanus and pneumonia vaccinations. Lovelace pharmacists also offer Ask the Pharmacist sessions for seniors.

In 2014, Lovelace Pharmacy anticipates continuing its Medical Reconciliation Program and increasing the availability of immunization services to more private organizations around the Albuquerque and Santa Fe area.

Lovelace also will add two additional pharmacy locations this year at new Lovelace Medical Group primary care clinics. Pharmacist clinicians will be part of the health care team for the patient-centered medical home that will be offered at these locations.

Meijer continues to offer more patient-focused practice

With 204 stores, Grand Rapids, Mich.-based Meijer has a history of punching above its weight when it comes to finding new ways to provide care through its in-store pharmacies. In a recent interview with DSN, Meijer VP pharmacy retail operations Karen Mankowski summed it up best: “We’ve been focusing on switching from a product-based practice to more of a patient-focused practice.”

One of the most recent examples is its in-store cholesterol testing. That program, which had been available in a handful of stores, was rolled last year into all its stores, available Monday through Friday.

In January, Meijer announced it would participate in a study with Ferris State University and the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Pharmacy to test the effectiveness of rapid diagnostic testing and dispensing of medicines to patients with influenza and strep throat. If patients turn out to have either illness, the pharmacist can dispense drugs for it under a special pharmacist-physician protocol.

This year, the chain will begin offering a medication-synchronization program that allows patients to fill all their prescriptions on the same day each month. The program will
NuCara brings pharmacy innovation to rural areas

Many of the developments in retail pharmacy that have attracted media attention have taken place in large, urban settings, but some of the most forward-thinking pharmacy retailers also can be found in rural areas.

Conrad, Iowa-based NuCara operates 21 stores — mostly in Iowa, as well as a few in Minnesota, Illinois and Texas — and has helped expand access to care in some of the most sparsely populated places in the country by leveraging cutting-edge new modes of care.

Last year, it began operating a telepharmacy service in Zearing, Iowa, a town with a population of 547. The service, which now includes about 700 patients, began in February 2013 as a pilot and has been based at a permanent location since July, managed from the nearby town of Nevada, Iowa.

The service allows the company to have a presence 40 hours per week and bring in pharmacist-provided patient care services, durable medical equipment and compounding.

Meanwhile, the Pleasant Hill, Iowa, store has a closed-door specialty pharmacy that serves about 2,000 patients per month who have HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections. That service began in October 2012, but the company is currently focused on expanding it.

The company also plans to turn several of its stores into “Diabetes Centers,” and it has developed a program for physicians to refer patients to it for diabetes self-management education. The goal is to help patients learn to manage their disease state for life and maintain control over their disease.

Wellness empowerment drives Rite Aid health strategy

Wellness empowerment. Those two simple words more or less describe everything Rite Aid is focused on right now as a company, empowering its customers to take more control of their health and well-being.

That theme of wellness empowerment is playing out in a number of critical initiatives for the company, including:

• wellness+. Rite Aid’s loyalty card was the first such program built upon a health and wellness platform. The card, which now has about 25 million active members, rewards points based on select purchases throughout the store. Important, in addition to discounts on select items, the program also delivers special, wellness-related rewards, such as a free health screening, gym membership discounts, and subscriptions to health and fitness magazines. To encourage customers to keep their prescriptions in one pharmacy — using multiple pharmacies is one of the key reasons patients tend not to adhere to their medications as prescribed — the program, where states allow, awards more points on prescriptions filled at Rite Aid. Since introducing the program in 2010, Rite Aid has developed some niche, lifestyle-focused versions of the program, including wellness+ for Diabetes and wellness+5+, which offer special consultations with Rite Aid pharmacists, among other exclusive offerings, such as special in-store health events for seniors on the first Wednesday of each month.

• Wellness stores. About one-quarter of Rite Aid’s 4,600 stores have been converted to some variation of a new format it calls its Wellness concept store, which puts a much greater emphasis on pharmacy, creating an area for patient consultations and generally making the pharmacist more accessible to customers. The stores also include another important feature — the

Quick Chek brings convenience to patient compliance

Increasing patient compliance is the top priority at Quick Chek. The Whitehouse Station, N.J.-based company operates 12 pharmacy stores as part of its chain of 138 retail locations throughout New Jersey and southern New York.

Quick Chek pharmacy locations are a hybrid of a convenience and drug store format. While a typical convenience store has four linear feet of OTC and HBC products, Quick Chek’s pharmacy stores feature 160 linear feet of OTC/HBC in an expanded section near the pharmacy. The chain is adding pharmacy consultation rooms to remodeled locations.

“We’re trying to improve patient compliance through a number of programs,” said Michael Wunder, director of pharmacy at Rite Aid. “Our refill reminder program now alerts patients to refills through phone, text or email. We’re moving forward with a new med sync program that will allow patients who take three or more prescriptions to shift to a synchronized program where they can refill all their prescriptions in one visit once a month.”

Quick Chek also provides patient consultation services; immunizations for flu, meningitis, HPV, pneumonia and shingles; and blood pressure screenings among other services.

Wunder said that it’s really Quick Chek pharmacists who set the chain apart. “The average tenure of our pharmacists is 15 years or more,” he said. “One of our pharmacists has been in the same location since 1980, and we have six pharmacists who have 25 years of service. Those pharmacists have been familiar healthcare professionals for multiple generations in some families. That inspires trust.”

Continued on page 20
Supervalu boosts diabetic care, preventive health

After selling 877 supermarkets and food/drug combo stores to an investment firm last year, including its Albertson’s, Jewel-Osco, Sav-on and other retail brands, Eden Prairie, Minn.-based Supervalu is a leaner company. But the firm remains the mid-Atlantic region and parts of the central United States based Supervalu is a leaner company. But the firm remains

“Eating Healthy with Diabetes,” a comprehensive educational and counseling program conducted jointly by specially trained pharmacists along with a registered dietitian. The purpose: to guide diabetic patients to better nutrition and lifestyle choices so they can continue to lead normal lives and reduce the risk of complications posed by diabetes. The program includes two-hour group tours of the store and pharmacy; most recently, Supervalu’s Shop ‘n Save division began offering the tours in February 2014.

Health screenings by appointment at some pharmacies for blood-glucose and hemoglobin A1C levels, as well as a full lipid panel test for cholesterol;

Adult immunizations by pharmacists for influenza, shingles, Continued on page 22

Thrifty White Pharmacy offers screenings for diabetes and hemoglobin A1C levels.

Thrifty White proves role of pharmacy in patient care

Running a community pharmacy is about more than selling medicines and everyday necessities “on the corner of Fourth and Main,” said Bob Narveson, president and CEO of Plymouth, Minn.-based Thrifty White Drug. It’s about being the most accessible health-and-wellness resource within the community and a springboard for innovative local health initiatives.

“Community pharmacies have an integral role in driving shared savings and improving patient care” with adherence programs, immunizations, health screenings and other clinical efforts, in collaboration with accountable care organizations, said Narveson, who also serves as chairman of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores.

Thrifty White embodies those concepts. The company’s 87 corporate-owned drug stores — along with roughly 80 affiliated independent drug stores — serve a sprawling swath of the upper and central Midwest, “providing health care to small towns and cities … that range from 1,000 to 90,000 in population.” The company also serves remote patients via telepharmacy.

Thrifty White strives to be a springboard for innovative health initiatives.

Thrifty White has become a top innovator in pharmacy-based care. Its pharmacists, said Tim Weippert, EVP pharmacy, “are the frontline professionals that patients come to during times of change and need for advice and assistance” with issues like health reform, insurance eligibility, managing disease and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It’s about engaging patients more effectively, Weippert

Continued on page 22

ShopRite promotes health with ‘Live Right’ campaign

When the people who manage a retail store also own the company, the motivation to please customers and keep them coming back is strong. Such is the case with ShopRite, the supermarket and pharmacy arm of Wakefern Food Corp., the merchandising and distribution arm of ShopRite, the supermarket and pharmacy arm of Wakefern Food Corp.

ShopRite is well known to millions of food store and pharmacy customers in the Northeast. The retailer-owned cooperative now operates more than 200 in-store pharmacies across its base of roughly 250 supermarkets spread throughout New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.

“From a small, struggling cooperative with eight members — all owners of their own grocery stores — Wakefern Food Corp., the merchandising and distribution arm for ShopRite, has grown into the largest retailer-owned cooperative in the United States and the largest employer in New Jersey,” said the company in a statement.

Under the theme “Caring Is Our Business,” ShopRite’s pharmacies extend both health services and cost-saving benefits to consumers in its market area. Diabetic patients, for instance, have access to free, 30-day supplies of several diabetic medications, and many generic drugs are available for $3.99 per 30-day prescription. Also offered to expectant moms: free 30-day supplies of prenatal vitamins.

Where regulations allow, ShopRite pharmacists provide both seasonal flu shots and pneumonia vaccinations. Meanwhile, a staff of more than 50 in-store registered dietitians work in partnership with pharmacists as a team to provide screenings and counseling on such health issues as diabetes and high cholesterol, and coach shoppers on proper nutrition and disease prevention under a program called “Live Right with ShopRite.”

Beyond the stores, ShopRite is deeply embedded in the welfare of its communities. Among its civic endeavors: long-time participation in and support for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and an innovative program called Supermarket Careers. Founded by ShopRite in 1989, the program provides education and training for special needs students to prepare them for meaningful careers in the supermarket industry and is now in place in 42 schools,” according to the company.

Continued on the next page

Thrifty White pharmacist and patient working on blood pressure.
Walgreens transforms pharmacy, creates well experience

The nation’s largest pharmacy provider has been in business since 1901, but Walgreens is firmly focused on the future of pharmacy-based patient care by providing cost-effective, comprehensive solutions to the nation’s troubled health system.

Walgreens is out to transform the way community pharmacy serves patients and the healthcare system as a whole. The chain, which now operates more than 8,200 pharmacies and more than 400 in-store health clinics, has expanded into virtually every facet of accessible community care.

“Walgreens’ scope of pharmacy services includes retail, specialty, infusion, medical facility and mail service, along with respiratory services,” the company reported.

“These services improve health outcomes and lower costs for payers including employers, managed care organizations, health systems, pharmacy benefit managers and the public sector.”

Walgreens is out to “transform the role of community pharmacy and create a well experience,” said president and CEO Greg Wasson.

“An aging population demands more pharmacy services,” Wasson said. “Walgreens is becoming a key part of the community healthcare delivery team, supporting primary care physicians, health plans and health systems to address patient needs and gaps in care.”

Continued on page 22

Walmart redoubles campaign for affordable care

When the world’s largest retailer expands its commitment to affordable health care, the impact ripples through the nation’s health system.

Walmart changed the prescription drug market eight years ago when it dropped the price of hundreds of generic medicines to $4 for a 30-day supply, unleashing a price-cutting tide at the nation’s pharmacies that the company claims has already saved Americans about $5 billion. The chain boosted price competition among Medicare Part D drug plans when it partnered with Humana in 2010 to launch the Humana Walmart-Preferred Rx Plan, which provides low monthly premiums and access to 10 hypertension drugs for a penny each when filled at a Walmart or Sam’s Club pharmacy.

Under the Humana Walmart-Preferred Rx Plan, Walmart offers 10 hypertension drugs for a penny each when filled at a Walmart or Sam’s Club pharmacy. Walgreens is transforming the way community pharmacy serves patients and the healthcare system as a whole. The chain, which now operates more than 8,200 pharmacies and more than 400 in-store health clinics, has expanded into virtually every facet of accessible community care.

Continued on page 22

Wegmans advancing health, wellness with flair

What do you call a supermarket and pharmacy chain that draws thousands of enthusiastic shoppers to its grand openings and elicits gushing, unsolicited praise on social media? In western New York state, eastern Pennsylvania and parts of New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and Massachusetts, consumers call it “Wegmans.”

Another customer called the chain “the be-all and end-all of supermarkets.”

Pharmacies have been an essential part of Wegmans’ one-stop appeal since 1972. Its pharmacists provide an expanding menu of services, including immunizations, skin discounts on generic medicines, an online ask-your-pharmacist service, free home prescription deliveries and a mobile app for prescription refills.

Wegmans’ pharmacists can vaccinate customers without an appointment against a variety of potential health threats, including flu, hepatitis A and B, chicken pox, shingles, HPV and meningitis.

What’s more, each store’s pharmacists work in tandem with Wegmans nutritionists, who provide advice, both in stores and online, on healthier eating habits and disease prevention.

Continued on page 22

Weis provides convenience, value with Lifestyles Initiative

Weis Markets successfully leverages both of its healthcare professionals — the registered dietitian and pharmacist — under one department called the Lifestyles Initiative. The department, headed by director Karen Buch, is all about providing solutions for consumers — whether they are consumers with pre-existing disease like diabetes or cardiovascular disease — that have a pharmaceutical component as well as a dietary component.

Through its Lifestyles Initiatives team, Weis Markets deploys a team of dietitians into the food aisles to help patients navigate their shopping lists with foods optimal to a specific condition as part of a program the grocer calls Cart Smart.

These 90-minute free tours for groups of six to 12 participants explore specific health condition needs that require better choices when it comes to food and nutrition. Tour topics include shopping heart smart, weight management, living with diabetes, living gluten-free and fueling up for fitness, among other conditions.

Bringing convenience and value to the markets it serves, Weis Markets pharmacy also has had a robust immunization offering for the past three years across its 131 locations with a pharmacy. Weis Markets pharmacies offer immunization services for pneumonia, shingles, meningitis, tetanus/diptheria/whooping cough and hepatitis A and B per state regulation.

Under the Humana Walmart-Preferred Rx Plan, Walmart offers 10 hypertension drugs for a penny each when filled at a Walmart or Sam’s Club pharmacy.

Continued on page 22
‘More than a pharmacy,’ Wilkinson provides solutions

Based in Nevada, Mo., Wilkinson Pharmacy operates seven stores in southwestern Missouri, providing pharmacy services, as well as home medical equipment, diabetic shoes, wheelchairs and prescription compounding. But the drug chain also describes itself as “more than a pharmacy” — a healthcare solution.

Late last year, the chain participated in an awareness program centered around falls, a common potentially dangerous problem among elderly patients and among those taking medications that can cause drowsiness or coordination problems. The campaign, called “ Falls Awareness,” included risk assessments on patients’ medications and in their homes. With the Affordable Care Act expected to increase the burden on primary care physicians, pharmacy retailers have emerged as key providers of many of the services traditionally associated with doctors. Immunizations are among the services that have become important to Wilkinson. Pharmacists at the chain can immunize against flu, shingles, pneumonia and meningitis, and under coordination with patients’ physicians, they can administer other immunizations.

Another service is health screenings, which pharmacists at Wilkinson can provide for such conditions as cholesterol and blood pressure, in addition to providing consultations with patients who have diabetes, or are looking to quit smoking or lose weight. Weight-loss counseling is provided through the Ideal Weight Loss program.

Cardinal

Continued from page 6

to-home medical supplies. The merg-

er of AssuraMed “allows us to serve
the growing number of Americans
treated in home settings, particularly
those patients recovering from acute
episodes and those suffering with
chronic diseases,” Barnett said. “That
ability to bring health products and
clinical services right into patients’
homes,” he added, “will be increas-
ingly important as the delivery of
care continues to move to more cost-
effective settings.”

The result, said Cardinal’s CEO early this year: “For the first time in our history, wherever healthcare products or services are needed, at any stage of the patient experience, we are there.”

CVS

Continued from page 7

pharmacies to help expand our wellness service offering,” Wilcox said. “Because of the patient centric nature of our retail stores, the virtual clinic connects Rite Aid customers don’t have time to make mul-
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The company’s wellness outreach ex-
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Rite Aid

Continued from page 15

A program called “thrivel” designed by a Bi-
Lo dietitian, “thrivel teaches … shoppers the
animals, and affordable choices both
in the store aisle and at home,” the company said.

Rite Aid pharmacists identify patients likely to be nonadherent. Rite Aid has also been exploring tele-

health through a partnership with Now-
Clinic. Now available in more than 50

Bi/Lo/Winn-Dixie

Continued from page 3

emergency department visits with the store.

Albertsons

Continued from page 4

pharmacists identified for treatment and

DrugstoreNews.com

Albertsons

Continued from page 4

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Albertsons

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Thifty White
Continued from page 16
asserted. “We have created more time for our pharmacists to delve into clinical services, building part-
nerships … with other members of the healthcare team, such as physi-
icians … and nurses.”
A priority has been boosting patient adherence, in particular by shifting thousands of patients to a synchro-
nized, once-a-month prescription refill system. The program makes it easier for patients to comply with their medi-
cation regimens. But it’s also served as a platform for monthly, face-to-face meetings between patient and phar-
cacist ranging from “a basic consulta-
tion … up to a full medication therapy
management session,” Weipert said.
Adherence efforts are just one facet of
what pharmacies like Thifty White can bring to a reforming health system in
despite need of cost-effective sol-
lutions, Narveson said. For instance,
the chain doubled the number of flu
shots it administered in the 2012-2013
flu season versus the previous year,
and recently hired its first nurse.

Supervalu
Continued from page 16
pneumonia, tetanus, meningi-
tis and other diseases;
• An automatic prescription refill
service, called RefillAdvantage,
which includes a call by the phar-
cacist to remind the patient that
the script is ready for pickup; and

Walgreens
Continued from page 18
To that end, Walgreens continues
to roll out its “Well Experience” store
format. The goal, said spokesman
Jim Cohn, is “to help position our
pharmacists to play a larger role in
health care by spending more time
with doctors, nurses and others.
In February, the company also an-
nounced that all of the more than 50
primary care worksite health centers
managed by its Take Care Employer
Solutions Group had been granted accredit-
ated by the Accreditation As-
sociation for Ambulatory Health Care
as patient-centered medical homes,
in compliance with nationally recog-
nized standards of care.
It’s a big step for a pharmacy pro-
vider and highlights Walgreens’ pro-
gress as a comprehensive source of
cost-saving health solutions.
“We’re changing the culture in health
care by driving a new model for
care delivery and creating a bet-
ter overall patient experience, and
the medical home accreditation from
AAAHC further validates the impact-
ful work we’re doing,” said Trent Ri-
ley, divisional VP for Take Care. It’s
about “reducing costs and improving health outcomes,” he added.