



News Release

For Immediate Release

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SAFER MEDICATION DISPENSING AT HALTON HEALTHCARE SERVICES

OAKVILLE, ON – The revitalization of the medication dispensing process at Halton Healthcare Services (HHS) continues to move forward with the installation of new *Omnicell* Automated Dispensing Units (ADU) at all three of its hospitals: Georgetown Hospital (GH), Milton District Hospital (MDH) and Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH). These units will not only enhance how medication is safely distributed to patients, but will revitalize the entire process of medication dispensing at HHS.

“Georgetown Hospital was the first of the three HHS hospitals to have this technology installed, and now OTMH is almost finished as well,” notes Helena Trabulsi, HHS Director of Pharmacy. “Since June 2012, almost 30 ADUs have been successfully installed at OTMH in patient care areas, including the Intensive Care Unit and the Operating Room. The Emergency Department and a couple of other patient care areas are still left to complete before OTMH is fully equipped with this technology, and then installations will begin this May at MDH.”

This new technology uses electronic screens and robotic mechanics to dispense the exact amount of medication ordered for the patient. Nursing staff sign in to the high-tech system using a fingerprint scan which, once verified by the system, provides the nurse with access to individually-packaged medications for their specific patient.

“The ADUs provide our healthcare providers and patients with a more accurate and safer drug distribution system,” said Sylvia Rodgers, HHS Chief Nursing Officer and Professional Practice Leader. “Having medications readily available, in fully stocked ADUs, in all patient care areas will reduce the time spent waiting for medications to be delivered from Pharmacy.”

The ADUs are linked to the patient drug information system already in place at HHS. This ensures healthcare providers can only select those medications that have been ordered for that specific patient and reviewed by a pharmacist, reducing potential medication errors. A new centralized, high speed, unit dose picker from *Swisslog* was installed in June at OTMH. This storage carousel, known as a BoxPicker, is connected to the ADUs and works with them to keep a current log of medication inventory. HHS is the first hospital in Canada to have the *Swisslog* BoxPicker technology installed.

“With this new technology, the extra safety checks that are incorporated reduce the risk of human error, so I feel a lot more confident administering medications.” stated Heidi Schutte, RN.

“With barcode bedside verification that will be implemented later this year, this technology will ensure patients get their intended dose and type of medications at the right time. The BoxPicker will also

improve the management of our drug inventory of over 2,500 products, while freeing up clinical staff to support patient care,” continues Mrs. Trabulsi. “In combination with the ADUs, HHS’ entire drug distribution system will be modernized, improving the efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness of providing medication to our patients.”

The introduction of bedside medication verification will involve bedside scanning of the patient wristband and the individually packaged medication - providing another safety checkpoint in the HHS medication management process.

The medication management process will be further enhanced with the addition of a pharmacy robot when the Pharmacy transfers to the New Oakville Hospital in 2015. The pharmacy robot is used to pick and pack a wider array of medications for patients. This will help to reduce the risk of medication errors associated with human error, and staff time spent in repetitive tasks so that they can focus on patient care.

“The next couple of years in the Pharmacy Department will be a truly exciting time as technology begins to play a greater role in medication dispensing at HHS,” concludes Mrs. Trabulsi.

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Photo Caption: (L-R) Julia Szucs, Pharmacy Assistant; Diane Olmstead, Project Manager, Medication Management; Helena Trabulsi, Director of Pharmacy; Michael Wood, Senior Pharmacy Assistant and Mahalia Moreau-Vailoo, Senior Pharmacy Technician stand with the *Swisslog* Boxpicker now housed in the OTMH Pharmacy.



Photo Caption: Michael Wood, Senior Pharmacy Assistant retrieves medication from the *Swisslog* Boxpicker.



Photo Caption: An inside shot of the *Swisslog* Boxpicker that was installed at OTMH June 2012.

