"I learn from the work ePharmacy pharmacists do and the comments they leave for providers. Patient safety has been so much more increased."

Diane Dady, RPh
Director of Pharmacy,
Mobridge (S.D.) Regional Hospital
This guide is for hospitals and health systems exploring options for 24/7 pharmacy services.

- Critical access hospitals
- Community/rural hospitals
- Health systems

This guide will help you:

- Quickly find the right product for your health system or hospital
- Determine key factors when considering the implementation of remote pharmacy services
- Understand key trends in the remote pharmacy services market
Remote pharmacy services connect providers or patients to remote pharmacists via electronic and/or live audiovisual connection for:

- Pharmacist review and verification of medication orders
- Medication reviews for dosage and allergies
- Drug therapy consultations
- Verification of medications removed from the pharmacy after hours
- Verification of sterile compounding by nurses when the pharmacy is closed
- Patient medication consultations

Remote pharmacy services are appealing as hospital systems work to meet regulatory guidelines for pharmacist review of medication orders prior to administration. However, remote pharmacy service providers can contribute substantially to hospitals beyond order verification.

Avera eCARE™, located in Sioux Falls, S.D., is a leader in telehealth services. Our ePharmacy service connects more than 70 hospitals to clinically trained pharmacists 24/7 to help enhance patient safety when an on-site pharmacist is not available.
Patient safety is a key reason hospitals and health systems are considering remote pharmacy services programs such as ePharmacy.

Around-the-clock staffing is key to ensure a pharmacist reviews all medications before being dispensed, per federal regulations. Remote pharmacy services offer a cost-effective alternative to hiring on-site pharmacists for around-the-clock coverage. In addition to reviewing the new medication orders, remote pharmacists can follow your treatment protocols and internal policies to keep things running smoothly until your site pharmacist returns.

In virtually all cases, remote pharmacy services is a cost-effective alternative due to economies of scale. Our pharmacists can provide off-site services and a rapid turnaround to multiple hospitals at once. In effect, you have a pharmacist on demand without the full-time cost.

Many rural hospitals are staffed with pharmacists 10 percent of the time or less.

Yet the level of pharmacy staffing and use of medication safety practices are key to hospital accreditation.
8 Questions to Understanding Remote Pharmacy Services Programs
What is your experience in telemedicine?

Where are your pharmacists located?

What clinical areas are in need of remote pharmacy services?

What kind of pharmacists do you employ?

How many pharmacists will I interact with?

How do you secure patient information?

What other kinds of services are offered?

What costs do I need to consider?
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What is your experience in telemedicine?

An experienced program has already worked out the details to providing a quality and efficient medication management program such as security, technology and staffing. Turnkey systems are more time and cost efficient and provide increased confidence for your providers.

By understanding the needs of our stakeholders, we’ve implemented streamlined virtual health systems for organizations large and small to increase efficiencies while simultaneously improving patient care and safety.
WITH 20+ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN TELEMEDECINE

Avera eCARE™ OFFERS SIX KEY SERVICES THAT COVER 13 STATES AND HAVE IMPACTED MORE THAN 1 MILLION PATIENTS
“Neither pharmacist here comes from a hospital background, so we’re very thankful that we can rely on ePharmacy to help us with dosing questions and monitoring patients.”

Melissa Dirks, RPh
Staff Pharmacist
Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital
(Minnesota)
Not all remote pharmacy services companies have their pharmacists working from a professionally licensed pharmacy; some pharmacists may be working at home. This limits interaction with other pharmacy, physician and nurse colleagues with which to collaborate for difficult cases. ePharmacy employs 23 licensed pharmacists who have the opportunity to collaborate with eCARE’s specialist physicians and critical care nursing colleagues at any time of the day or night to help problem-solve complex situations.
Before you settle with a remote pharmacy services provider, determine your needs. How comprehensive of a program do you need? Are your needs solely for inpatients? Will your emergency staff use the program? Interview several services to find a company that meets your criteria.

ePharmacy provides a number of key service areas for a highly comprehensive program should you need it.
Emergency Department

• Review and verification of non-emergent medications
• Rapid turnaround

Hospital Outpatient Areas

• Review and verification of outpatient medication orders
• Independent pharmacist double-checks of outpatient chemotherapy orders
• Ongoing monitoring of potentially problematic therapies until the course is complete

Inpatient Care Areas

• Review and verification of medication orders within the hospital
• Remote verification of after-hours medication removal from the pharmacy or verification of medications for restocking of dispensing cabinets
• Antimicrobial stewardship support
• Discharge medication education for patients
• Ongoing monitoring of potentially problematic therapies throughout the patient’s stay
• Verification of medication preparation by nursing staff
• Identification of medications brought to hospital by patients
As you choose a program for your inpatient pharmacy needs, make sure your staff will be connecting to experienced hospital pharmacists who understand the parenteral medications and administration guidelines that are common in a hospital setting to help avert adverse drug events.

ePharmacy pharmacists are licensed in all the states they practice in. More importantly, our pharmacists are experienced in the clinical setting. Our pharmacists are familiar with:

- Hospital workflow
- Fluid compatibilities
- Appropriate monitoring parameters for drug efficacy and side effects
Quick turnaround of medication reviews can be key in a hospital setting when patient situations necessitate quick response.

ePharmacy staffs pharmacists according to demand on all shifts, thus assuring adequate pharmacist resources at all times. Our pharmacists generally work a seven-on, seven-off fixed schedule so your staff can build a relationship with a consistent team.

Our turnaround times for medication reviews rival those of on-site pharmacists.
Hospitals must comply with HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) whether they are using an on-site pharmacist or remote pharmacy services. The consequence for falling short of compliance cannot only be costly but damaging to your reputation.

Avera’s data systems and technology follow HIPPA regulations to ensure that patient information is transferred securely and remains confidential at all times.

Our system uses a virtual private network (VPN) and encrypted video to assure the secure transfer of data.
Having fewer staff on site can make verification of drug compounded sterile products more difficult, which can lead to dangerous and costly medication errors.

ePharmacy is positioned to ensure a pharmacist is available to support various pharmacy functions.

• Verification of medications removed from the pharmacy after-hours
• Remote verification of sterile medication preparation
• Remote verification of automated dispensing cabinet refills
• Remote patient consults by video to assure patients understand the medications they will be taking after hospital discharge

What other kinds of services are offered?
There are many facets to a successful pharmacy program and not all remote pharmacy services are created equal. Before you secure long-term contract understand the costs and services provided.

Some companies might have a basic contract with many a la carte services that come at an extra cost. Understand each feature that is included as well as those that may increase your costs.
“You guys make my day so much better, I love having you there! Before ePharmacy, I would dread Mondays and the pile of work waiting for me.”

Bill Vander Aarde, RPh
Pharmacy Manager
Milbank (S.D.) Area Hospital Avera
ePharmacy is backed by the experienced Avera eCARE team to provide pharmacy services to hospitals and health systems of all sizes.

**Comprehensive Services**
- Inpatient and outpatient medication review and consultation
- Verification of medication preparation, packaging and cabinet refills
- Verification of medications removed from pharmacy after-hours
- Support for your antimicrobial stewardship plan
- Provide supplemental coverage when your hospital’s pharmacists are pulled into short- or long-term projects, rounding with your medical team, or providing patient consultations

**Benefits**
- Improves patient safety through decreased medication errors and adverse drug events
- Increases cost-effectiveness and savings from fewer adverse drug effects
- Ensures compliance with federal regulations for 24/7 pharmacist review
- Improves medication management for complex patients
- Improves quality of life for on-site pharmacists
- Improves continuity of pharmacy services 24/7
LEARN MORE ABOUT
ePharmacy

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