



Guardian Pharmacy of Maine Harnesses Smarter Purchasing to Reduce the Impact of Rising Prescription Drug Shortages on Patients.



INDUSTRY

Long-term care

HIGHLIGHTS

Founded: 2007

Headquarters:
Brunswick, Maine

Challenges: Drug shortages

- Unexpected out-of-stocks
- Patients unable to get prescription drugs
- Impact on relationship with patients

Solutions

An integrated solution to anticipate, respond to and mitigate the impact of prescription drug shortages:

- Diversify vendor portfolio
- Reduce out-of-stocks
- Communicate with patients and caregivers
- Streamline pharmacy purchasing through automation

INTERVIEWS

Chris Bayrd,
Regional Purchaser at
Guardian Pharmacy

SureCost's automated purchasing software solution empowers Guardian Pharmacy to manage prescription drug shortages and enhance patient satisfaction.

The Company

Guardian Pharmacy Services

Guardian Pharmacy of Maine is a long-term care pharmacy that serves skilled nursing, assisted living and behavioral health facilities across the state. Formerly part of the Waltz family of pharmacies, since 2007, they've been part of the nationwide network of Guardian Pharmacies, one of the country's leading LTC pharmacy services companies.

Their team includes experienced clinical pharmacists performing both dispensing and clinical pharmacy consulting services and certified pharmacy technicians. Guardian Pharmacy of Maine ("Guardian") combines the personal service of a local pharmacy with the technology, resources and support of a national brand.

The Challenge

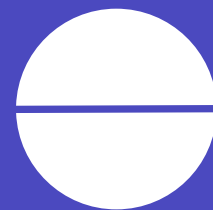
Like many pharmacies, Guardian needed to ensure the continuity of quality patient care in case of a prescription drug shortage. Unfortunately, supply chain issues, regulatory challenges and unexpected spikes in demand continue to drive up the number of drug shortages.

Chris Bayrd, Guardian's regional purchaser and an experienced pharmacy professional, notes that "things haven't totally recovered since COVID-19. For example, before the pandemic, we would have to change over NDCs for around 34 items. That number now hovers around 50 to 60. This suggests more market viability between them: either cheaper NDCs, NDCs being removed from the market or NDCs out of stock."

"Many times, a drug shortage is no real issue for us. It's as simple as moving that product to another available vendor using this intuitive platform. The item may be on backorder, but we don't feel that pressure." – Chris Bayrd, Regional Purchaser at Guardian Pharmacy of Maine

Recently, drug shortages hit their highest rate since 2014: 309 active ongoing drug shortages in the first quarter of 2023 (according to the [American Society of Health-System Pharmacists](#)). But a single out-of-stock item can impact a patient's health and trust in their pharmacy. Guardian needed to mitigate the impact of prescription drug shortages on patient care and their bottom line without overhauling any existing processes or adding more work to their staff's day.

“Having that diverse vendor availability at our fingertips allows Guardian to pull from multiple sources to meet our patients’ needs.” – Chris Bayrd, Regional Purchaser at Guardian Pharmacy



The Solution

SureCost is a unified pharmacy purchasing and inventory software solution designed for pharmacies to optimize buying decisions and discover money-saving opportunities from their entire integrated catalog. It works with all major wholesalers and the vast majority of secondary providers, GPOs and other pharmaceutical sources.

How SureCost Helped

With SureCost, Guardian gained a single solution for pharmacy purchasing and inventory management. The team could now consult this “single source of truth” to compare purchasing options from an even wider range of vendors. At the same time, SureCost’s Purchase Manager Compliance Insights™ monitored compliance. They could then upload purchase orders for multiple vendors through this single interface.

Diverse Vendor Portfolio

Outstanding patient care is always the top priority for Bayrd and the team at Guardian. “At the end of the day,” he says, “having that diverse vendor availability at our fingertips allows Guardian to pull from multiple sources to meet our patients’ needs.” The flexibility to purchase from throughout the market means more options for alternative products and competitive pricing. SureCost’s primary vendor assurance allows Guardian to make these purchases while instantly checking compliance performance.

Guardian’s expanded vendor portfolio includes vendors uniquely positioned to supply backordered medications (such as vendors specializing in predictive market shortages who purchase large volumes for resale). The ability to purchase directly from manufacturers also provides market intelligence about possible drug shortages on the horizon and, in some cases, the ability to “jump to the front of the shortage line” and compensate in advance.

Robust and Easily Accessible Data

Guardian also harnesses data to alleviate the impact of prescription drug shortages. Bayrd notes how “SureCost combines all our vendors into one screen in any way our pharmacy may want to view availability and pricing. It’s also very easy to describe to another purchaser on my team.” Guardian can also pull data on active reorders and contact both vendors and long-term care facilities before their patients run out of supply. If there’s an extended backorder, this communication allows caregivers to consider a different course of therapy early on.

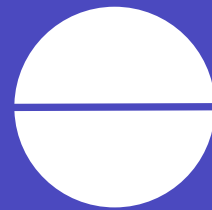
Intelligent Automation in Pharmacy Systems

Automation allowed Guardian to streamline current processes. The technology integrated with their existing pharmacy systems, so Guardian didn’t need to change how they did their work.

Guardian Pharmacy leveraged SureCost’s intelligent automation to:

- Generate purchase orders based on preset minimums and maximums
- Scan items at receiving to verify product, quantity and price instantly
- Manage returns through one platform
- Eliminate the need for:
 - “Double receiving” between systems
 - Tedious, error-prone manual entry
 - Paying third parties for invoice reconciliation

“SureCost combines all our vendors into one screen in any way our pharmacy may want to view availability and pricing. It’s also very easy to describe to another purchaser on my team.” – Chris Bayrd, Regional Purchaser at Guardian Pharmacy



Benefits

Guardian uses SureCost to diversify its trade partners, and this single purchasing software platform makes it easier to purchase from that larger vendor portfolio. The ability to quickly and easily compare pharmacy purchasing options lets Guardian see the cheapest product and which products account for compliance.

Bayrd explains, “I can go through each product and see, ‘Oh, I can get savings here’ and set my savings threshold. It’s organized as well as you can get in terms of what pharmacies need to see.”

Alongside more vendors, Guardian can access a greater range of pharmacy purchasing data to inform how they advise facilities and caregivers. Flexible reporting allows them to pull and analyze the information they need quickly. “Data is king!” said Bayrd. “With all these labor shortages, having all that data easily accessible in our operating system is crucial for getting the information to the right person at the facilities.”

Automation in pharmacy processes saves Guardian time otherwise lost to manual methods. “Automated replenishment has been the number one time saver,” according to Bayrd. “A close second would probably be purchase order reconciliation with debits and credits. Those functions are right in SureCost, and we could pull that right into our operating system.” Bayrd adds that “automating return paperwork, so we don’t have to go through a vendor’s website, is another time saver.”

Read

SureCost’s white paper:
**Best-in-Class
Pharmacy Inventory
Automation and
3 Ways to Achieve It**
to learn best practices
for managing your
pharmacy’s inventory.



“I have confidence that when I look up a product’s availability in SureCost, I can tell that facility, ‘You can get this.’ It’s reassuring to be able to give them that certainty instead of having just one vendor source that may have run out.”

— Chris Bayrd, Regional Purchaser, Guardian Pharmacy



[Book a Meeting](#)

How Can SureCost Help You?

Book a 30-minute meeting with us today. See SureCost in action and strategize how we can support your pharmacy to save more, stay compliant and work smarter.