



Delmar, New York
Established 2005

**Independent and
locally owned**

**Two pharmacist owners
Three pharmacists total
Four pharmacy techs
14 employees**

Philosophy:
Four Corners sets
itself apart with truly
incomparable customer
service. As a small town
pharmacy, we treat our
staff and our customers like
family. We get to know our
customers so that each time
you come in, we know who
you are and how to take
care of you. At Four Corners
Pharmacy, you will never
feel like just a number.

Backline Secure Care Collaboration Improves Efficiency for Community Pharmacy

A common misperception is that pharmacists spend each day merely filling prescriptions. But nothing could be further from the truth. Today's pharmacists are an integral part of a patient's healthcare journey. In addition to dispensing medication, their days revolve around insurance and formulary verification, building out accurate medication histories, and supporting chronic care management. And, they are being asked to do all of this with less, making for very hectic days.

Four Corners Pharmacy in Delmar, New York, is conquering this challenge by embracing new technologies that are helping them provide above-and-beyond service to customers and improve the overall pharmacy workflow and performance.

Challenge

As the number of pharmacy-related tasks increased, Four Corners' owner and pharmacist John Croce, saw an alarming impact on workflow efficiency. Verification phone calls, for instance, were consuming the time of pharmacists and pharmacy techs. Calls to doctors to verify prescriptions, to insurance companies to confirm coverage, and to patients to clarify personal information all took up valuable time the staff needed for other essential tasks.

Adding to the chaos, was the rarity of a person answering the pharmacist's call and responding immediately. Phone tag was far too common, adding more troublesome delays to the pharmacy workflow and to getting patients on their therapies. The inability to leave a request for specific information due to HIPAA privacy laws complicated the situation even more.

Croce looked for a new and more efficient way to communicate between care teams, payers, and patients. He found success using DrFirst's Backline® care collaboration platform.

Technology Solution

In 2018, Croce installed Backline for his pharmacy staff to reduce the volume of daily phone calls. While some skeptics have noted that a text message is more impersonal than a phone call, Croce is quick to point out the pervasiveness of texting in today's culture. A person can choose to respond to a voice message at some point (or not). Texts are more likely to get immediate attention – a response within 10 seconds is quite common.

As one of the first pharmacies in New York state to actively use Backline, Croce began his program as a test. First, he had to change the culture of his staff, bringing them on board with secure texting – no small challenge because calling patients and payers was a career long, ingrained habit.



“We are all being asked to do more with less. That is why it is critical to look for every possible way to use a text rather than a phone. Sharing specific information quickly frees up techs’ time to do more enhanced services. With the time freed up by eliminating phone and fax tag, pharmacies can even do another compliance package without adding staff.”

—John Croce
Pharmacist and Owner
Four Corners Pharmacy, Delmar, NY

Through training and example, Croce is changing the behavior of his fellow pharmacists. Noting his success in getting quick responses when he uses Backline has gotten the attention of his peers and his staff. Also, Croce has found texting champions on his team who have quickly embraced the technology and achieved excellent results.

Next, Croce and his staff had to introduce texting to their customers. The Four Corners staff produced flyers that they distributed in the pharmacy and created stuffers to insert into customers’ shopping bags when they picked up other meds.

Education has helped customers know what to expect. Now, they recognize the text as an important message from Four Corners rather than unwanted spam.

Finally, Croce and his team wanted to make sure to comply with all opt-in regulations, get customers enrolled, and help the staff know quickly whether a customer has opted in or out. To do this, Croce added customer contact information to the Four Corners’ receipts. Blank fields indicated that a pharmacist should ask the customer if they wanted to enroll in texting. When a customer’s home and cell number appeared, the staff knew that the customer was participating already. When the fields were populated with 9s, it was a sign that the customer had opted out and should not be asked again.

To continue with the education and enrollment process, Croce also ordered customized prescription tops to encourage customers to “Ask us about our texting service.”

Outcomes

Backline has helped Four Corners Pharmacy improve customer service and satisfaction significantly. For instance, when the pharmacy needed a customer’s new insurance card, Croce sent the request for the new card through Backline. The customer took a picture of the insurance card and immediately texted it back. This timely exchange eliminated potentially hours, or days, of delays.

What’s more, the efficiency of the pharmacy workflow has greatly improved, freeing up pharmacists’ time to add innovative, new services to its customer offerings, including pharmacy care management home visits for Medicaid patients.

Now, pharmacists can do monthly visits and communicate findings back to the doctor. Because Backline is fully secure and HIPAA compliant, it offers the functionality for pharmacists to send PHI back to the doctor –these are the issues, these are the corrections. The pharmacists can text doctors freely and clinically back and forth without the time delays and burdens of faxes.

Based on his successful experience with Backline, Croce has this advice for other pharmacies: “We are all being asked to do more with less. That is why it is critical to look for every possible way to use a text rather than a phone. Sharing specific information quickly frees up techs’ time to do more enhanced services. With the time freed up by eliminating phone and fax tag, pharmacies can even do another compliance package without adding staff.”

Ultimately, Croce would like to see more pharmacists and providers on Backline to make the healthcare experience better. There are a finite number of phone lines, but nearly everyone has a cell phone. The technology helps remove barriers to care, increase efficiency, and improve pharmacy performance overall.