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Military pharmacies automate with bar coding, dispensing

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Military pharmacies are increasingly turning to bar-coded medication administration, automatic dispensing cabinets, pill-counting software and other mobile and remote technologies to automate pharmacy processes, save money and protect patient safety. The U.S. Navy's command at Pensacola, Fla., for example, includes 11 healthcare facilities in addition to the Pensacola Naval Hospital. With a telepharmacy system, any pharmacist on duty at any of these locations can verify that a prescription is accurate.

"It started out with robotics systems...and that has expanded into adding on workflow systems that coordinate the [roles in a] pharmacy," Mike Coughlin, president and CEO of ScriptPro, tells *Military Medical Technology*. The Mission, Kan.-based vendor supplies technology to hundreds of Army, Navy and veterans pharmacies. "[It] prioritizes and organizes the workflow to make pharmacies operate more efficiently and accurately," Coughlin adds.

Other Department of Defense sites have turned to automated kiosks for prescription pickup, even when the pharmacy is closed. But perhaps the biggest military deployment of prescription-dispensing technology is at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., which has had the Central Pharmacy product from Mountain View, Calif.-based Omnicell in place since 2008. The system serves as a distribution center of sorts for dispensing cabinets throughout the Walter Reed complex, helping to take much of the manual labor out of the prescription filling process, including time-consuming inventory counts and the need to hunt for prescriptions on crowded shelves.

For further details:

- take a look at this *Military Medical Technology* [feature](#) [1]

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