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## Patient-facing kiosks automate prescription dispensing

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Kiosks are popping up in doctors' offices and hospitals for patient registration, patient education and similar forms of data entry and dissemination. Behind the scenes, automated medication cabinets dispense bar-coded medication dosages to authorized healthcare professionals. Now, at least two companies have combined the two technologies to create self-service, medication-dispensing kiosks for consumers.

The machines represent a fast, convenient way of dispensing prescription drugs at pharmacies after hours, in community clinics with limited staffing and in rural locations that lack pharmacists. They also can free up pharmacists from the drudgery of counting pills to allow for more direct patient counseling. "The greatest benefit that this system has is that it's freeing the pharmacist up from what they call the technical aspects of the job," Don Waugh, co-founder and CEO of PCA Services, a Canadian firm that makes such kiosks, is quoted as saying in *SelfServiceWorld*. "Our pharmacists aren't doing that; they're actually having a one-on-one session with the patients and reviewing not just this drug, but all drugs they're on and doing more counseling."

There are, of course, concerns about the chance of prescription drugs falling into the wrong hands. Laurence Cohn, president and CEO of another kiosk manufacturer, eAnytime, says the Huntington Beach, Calif., company has worked closely with the DEA, drug companies, large medical clinics and state pharmacy boards to protect against unauthorized access. "You have to have a very safe system and a very accurate system," Cohn tells *SelfServiceWorld*. "We designed a foolproof system."

That's a strong claim, but both eAnytime and PCA Services report having backlogs of orders for their products.

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