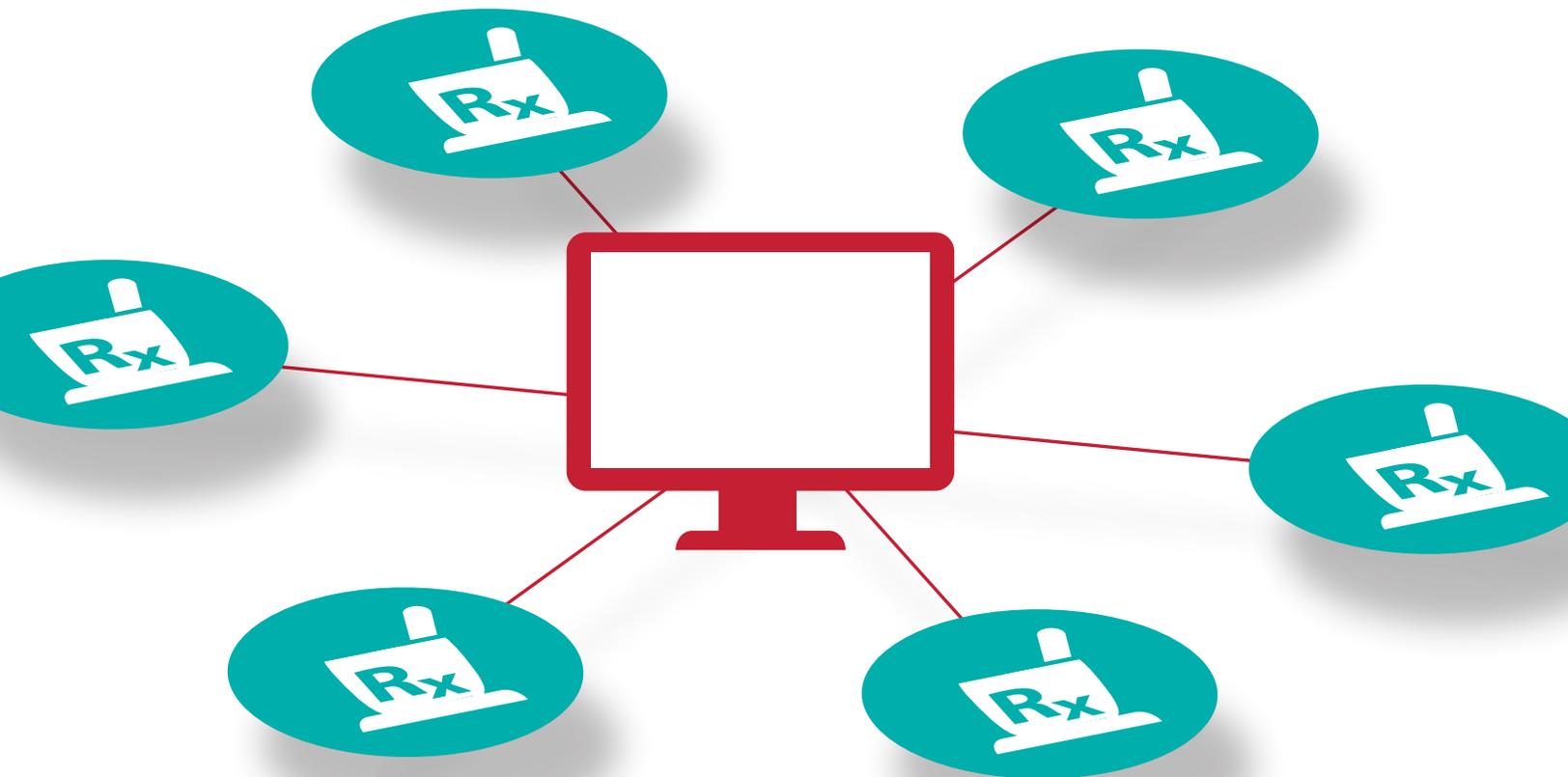# 7 Essentials for Managing Multiple Pharmacies

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Having multiple pharmacy locations can present a dilemma to owners. Especially if you only have a few stores. According to the NCPA Digest, the average independent pharmacy owner has 1.69 pharmacies. There's no doubt that each pharmacy added, while bringing the potential for greater profits, creates greater management issues.

While the pharmacy management system is the center of any pharmacy operation, multiple-location operations need more. You need a system that enables you to maintain central control and management of all locations.

These 7 essentials will give you the power of much larger chains:

1 Comprehensive and flexible pharmacy management system

The core for quality patient care and efficient and profitable store operations, a robust store system is critical. The key is the system's ability to connect you with the tools you need – POS, IVR, automated dispensing, etc. It must handle everything from prescription dispensing to other functions such as prescription synchronization, clinical checking, billing, compliance documentation (including Medicare Part B) and medication therapy management. And, it must be easy to learn and use because you need to get new or fill-in staff up and running as quickly as possible.

2 Simplified management system

We believe the best central management system for community pharmacies with up to 10 stores is the host-remote configuration. With this configuration, all your stores run off one central, secure server, greatly simplifying your IT responsibilities. Routine maintenance – updates and troubleshooting of software clinical files, pricing structure, virus protection, backups – are required only on one server. It's a solid, low maintenance solution that lowers costs and simplifies communication – the perfect solution for growing community operations.

3 Central maintenance of all store files

Critical to any multiple store operation is the ability to centrally manage and update files – including patient and doctor profiles, inventory, purchasing, pricing and billing. The system should allow you to modify files for one store, a group of stores or all stores.

Central management of doctor and drug files enables you to easily add new records quickly. A central employee file also allows pharmacists and techs to move between stores without requiring separate passwords.

4 Reporting at your fingertips

You should be able to quickly access data from any store for reporting and track trends in specific markets or zones for more informed decision-making. The system should provide flexibility in reporting and enable you to export the data for additional analysis.

5 Centralization of routine tasks

A system should enable you to centralize routine tasks. You should be able to bill and reconcile claims centrally. This is a tremendous time-saver and provides much greater quality control.

Central filling allows you to fill all prescriptions from one location, if you choose. The prescriptions can be returned to the store for dispensing or mailed directly to a customer, freeing your in-store staff to devote more time to patient counseling and other tasks.

6 Monitor workflow

A central workflow allows you to monitor each store's volume. When volume starts to build, additional personnel can help store staff by resolving errors and troubleshooting problems.

7 Enhanced customer satisfaction and safety

Company-wide interaction checking gives your patients re-assurance and allows them the convenience of using any of your locations and knowing all of their medications are checked regardless of which location they were filled. Patients will appreciate the communication between your locations with shared profiles and easy prescription transfers.

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