

About SMP Pharmacy Solutions

South Miami Pharmacy (SMP) was founded in 2003 by Dr. Armando Bardisa with a goal to improve the quality of life for their customers and patients through personalized service. In order to provide customized service for their patients, SMP offers hard to find medications, compounding services, one-on-one fertility specialists and medication therapy management for specialty pharmacy patients.



Brian Brito, Vice President



Background

Serving patients in most of the 50 U.S. states and many international countries, South Miami Pharmacy rebranded itself as SMP Pharmacy Solutions in 2015 to better reflect their global services. Considering that they ship approximately 10,000 prescriptions each month from their 2 Miami facilities, many to South America and Caribbean locations, safe shipment of temperature-sensitive products is particularly critical to their focus on patient care and quality.

Fertility treatments are a large segment of SMP's business and most of these medications require refrigeration. Acknowledging that this is a highly sensitive and emotionally invested treatment for the patients they serve, product integrity is critically important to SMP.

Needs drive indicator evaluation

"Particularly during the summer months, we would receive calls from our patients stating that the ice packs were melted and they were not sure if the medications were still effective and safe to use," said Brian Brito, Vice President, whose pharmacy expertise and commitment to quality pharmacy services have helped drive SMP's success. "Plus, we also needed to implement this cold chain procedure for our specialty pharmacy accreditation and state requirements."

"Temptime had been trying to get us to use their heat indicators for quite some time," he added. "Quite honestly, we were hesitant when thinking that it might cause more calls and customer confusion. Additional considerations were cost, implementation of a new system to the workflow, and extra time added to the packaging process."

Shipping studies prove value

Despite those concerns, SMP is completely dedicated to patient safety and satisfaction, so they agreed to work together with Katie Kraverath from Temptime on developing and executing

shipping studies. Convinced that gathering solid data on exactly what was going on with their shipments would reveal the answer, SMP worked with Katie and Temptime to set up the temperature-monitored test package shipments to various locations, along with FedEx, who handles SMP's specialty pharmacy shipping.

"We were surprised to find out how hot the packages got – even with double packing and ice packs," said Brian. "It opened our eyes to the fact that sometimes the package sits in a truck at 110°F heat, or misses the flight, and sits even longer. Using an indicator shows our patients that we are committed to them."

"Katie is genuine and always provided true value to our business, introducing us to other specialty pharmacies that were using indicators to improve their processes and patient satisfaction," he added. "That helped us know that this was the right thing to do – for both our patients and our business."

Making the choice

SMP evaluated several temperature indicators but landed with LIMITmarker, noting that they knew it would be easy for their customers to read, and reliable at a reasonable price per unit. Brian noted that none of the other options provided the flexibility and technical support they were seeking.



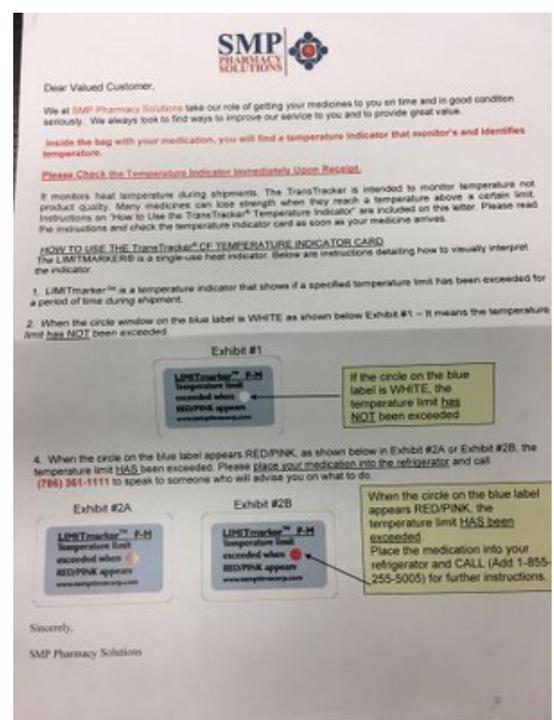
They also liked that LIMITmarker is easily customizable, and have incorporated it into their own indicator card, with their logo, instructions and contact information – further demonstrating their commitment to strong bonds with their customers.

Implementation strategy

Despite their initial concerns, SMP encountered no real significant challenges. They incorporated the new temperature indicator SOP into their workflow at both shipping facilities, and trained staff to respond to patient questions about the indicators. "Role playing was particularly helpful", explained Brian.

"With every shipment we send a patient letter that explains how the temperature indicator is used, read, and when to call us if the indicator shows the temperature limit was exceeded," said Brian.

SMP is now including a customized LIMITmarker card and patient instructions with all refrigerated shipments



that are sent out via FedEx, and also with their couriers for in-person deliveries.

Return on investment

“The most important return is that the temperature indicator helps us give both our patients and staff peace of mind,” said Brian. “Again, these tools like LIMITmarker support our position on patient safety and commitment to superior quality care.”

The direct ROI for SMP has been savings of thousands of dollars on what would have been spoiled medications and reshipment fees. Also, the increased volume of physician referrals has not been quantified, but SMP has confirmed a positive impact on their business.



Increased prescriber confidence

SMP focuses on educating prescribers about the importance and value of temperature indicators. The outcome has been an increase in prescriber confidence, resulting in more referrals to SMP.

“We have begun to show prescribers how indicators are incorporated into our refrigerated shipments,” he said. “This has become a valuable tool to show our commitment to patient safety. After these presentations where we demonstrate the indicators and packaging, the physicians and their staff thank us for educating them, and helping to provide quality care for their patients. They understand that partnering with a specialty pharmacy that takes these extra measures is key to patient care.”

Key to patient satisfaction & supply chain quality

It’s no surprise to learn that SMP has been awarded “Highest in Customer Satisfaction” by J.D. Power & Associates, among their many other accolades. After implementing temperature indicators, SMP’s reshipments due to temperature concerns have dramatically decreased. Patients have increased peace of mind knowing that their medications were not exposed to excessive heat.

“I would strongly encourage a pharmacy to implement temperature indicators into their business. The advantages I’ve described – and that SMP has experienced - should outweigh any concerns,” said Brian in closing. “The tool (temperature indicator) is critical to a quality supply chain program.”