

CASE STUDY

Greenville Memorial Medical Center



Overview

Greenville Memorial Medical Center (GMMC) is the 814-bed flagship facility of Greenville Health System (GHS), which is one of twelve hospitals that is now part of Prisma Health. Serving a variety of patient populations throughout the upstate and midlands regions of South Carolina, the hospital is committed to delivering the best possible patient care while promoting a safe, healthy and satisfying work environment for staff. This commitment holds true with regards to controlled substance waste disposal. Given the current opioid crisis and the increasing risks of drug

diversion in hospitals, the organization was looking to ensure its methods for controlled waste disposal were safe, compliant and easy to implement.

According to John Pearson, Director of Pharmacy at GMMC, "We were familiar with Stericycle's work because the company already handled and disposed of the hospitals' other pharmaceutical waste. Since Stericycle's waste management programs complement each other, organization leaders felt it made good sense to shift controlled waste disposal to Stericycle."

With the help of Stericycle's **CsRx® Controlled Substance Waste Service**, GMMC has standardized its approach to controlled substance waste management, lessening the staff's burden involved in the effort and implementing a reliable and proactive program that cost-effectively mitigates the risk of diversion, while preserving the environment.

Solving Challenges

Before turning to Stericycle, GMMC used another waste management company for controlled waste disposal and found several challenges with the equipment. First, the hospital's pharmacy staff were tasked with servicing the waste containers, which entailed periodically emptying them, replacing batteries, setting up new receptacles and so on. "Not only was this onerous, it also pulled staff away from their patient-focused duties, which was frustrating for both patients and staff," said Pearson. In addition, because the receptacles were relatively small, they often overflowed, resulting in an increased diversion risk as well as a safety hazard.

By switching to CsRx, GMMC was able to remove the burden of servicing the containers from staff. Now, trained Stericycle technicians pick up the containers at pre-determined times, and staff members do not need to be involved in the process. At the time of pickup, technicians add a solidifying agent to the waste to make it solid prior to shipping, preserving safety and further preventing diversion. They then replace used containers with new ones that are ready for immediate use. Once the technician removes the waste from the facility, it is completely disposed of through incineration, which is recommended by the Environment Protection Administration (EPA) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

[See Results](#) >>



Along with its superior service and reliability, Greenville Memorial Medical Center (GMMC) was also attracted to Stericycle's simple-to-use containers that automatically deactivate controlled substances on contact without requiring batteries or other tools. The specially designed receptacles render waste unusable, curtailing the chances of diversion. Because Stericycle technicians proactively pickup and dispose of the receptacles, they never overflow, maintaining a safe working environment.

Results

By switching to Stericycle's CsRx service, GMMC now has a streamlined and reliable process for disposing of controlled substance waste. "Not only has the program been cost-effective and easy to implement, but the day-to-day aspects do not pull staff away from patients because Stericycle provides an end-to-end service," said Pearson.

The program has reduced the risk of drug diversion through its proactive disposal processes and its use of waste containers that are engineered to mitigate theft. The service is environmentally friendly as well, using incineration to limit the possibility of controlled substances leaching into the surrounding environment.

GMMC also takes advantage of the product training that Stericycle provides, which involves an expert coming onsite to fully brief staff on how to properly dispose of controlled substance waste. Stericycle also offers posters, instruction sheets and other collateral to easily remind staff how to follow procedures.

By partnering with Stericycle, GMMC safeguards staff, patients and the environment by employing Stericycle's CsRx and other waste disposal services. Staff are happier and organization leaders are confident that the hospital's controlled substance waste disposal is reliable, consistent and compliant.

"Not only has the program been cost-effective and easy to implement, but the day-to-day aspects do not pull staff away from patients because Stericycle provides an end-to-end service."

*– John Pearson,
Director of Pharmacy, GMMC*

For more information, visit stericycle.com/CsRx or call **866-338-5120**.