



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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CHARLESTON AFB PHARMACY GETS A NEW LOOK

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. – Renovations to the Charleston AFB pharmacy were completed in early June.

“We have been working for a couple of years to try to bring the pharmacy into the 21st century,” said Maj. Royce Terry, 437th Medical Support Squadron Pharmacy Services chief. “The previous design we were working with was good for filling 200-300 prescriptions per day. But we fill 800 or more prescriptions each day, and we felt crowded.”

The pharmacy underwent three stages of renovation starting in November 2001. The first stage was the construction phase, the second

“The first stage was the construction phase, where we gutted the offices out to make more space,” said Terry. During their second stage, the Health Facilities Office from Air Mobility Command came to CAFB to assist with the construction.

“In the second phase, we installed the fixtures and developed the work flow to process prescriptions,” said Terry.

In the last stage, new technology was implemented in the pharmacy.

“The new technology changes the requirements for the patients; they now have to check in before they can receive prescriptions that were scripted by their doctor for same-day prescription pickup,” said Terry. “We incorporated a lot of bar codes and digital imagery to insure the quality of the product we produce.

“We are trying to minimize human intervention,” Terry continued. “If we take away the opportunity for human intervention, we can reduce mistakes in patients’ prescriptions.”

During the construction phase, the pharmacy doubled their access by adding three windows, said Terry. It now has three windows available for turning in prescriptions and three windows for picking up prescriptions.

Terry said two of the turn-in windows are for written prescriptions only. A technician inputs the written prescription into the computer and takes all the patient’s information. The written prescription is then scanned into the computer. When that is finished, the information is sent on to the electronic counter.

The other turn-in window is for patients who just finished their visit to the doctor and are checking in to get their prescription, Terry said. After the patient checks in, a technician sends it back to the electronic counter.

Terry said after the technicians tell the computer to go ahead with the prescription, the pills start automatically counting in the electronic counter. A technician then gets the label for each medicine and must scan it to be able to release the pills into the bottle. On the electronic counter technician's computer, it shows a picture of what the pill looks like to so the technicians can make sure they have the correct pill. From there, it must then go to the quality checker's desk to insure all pills are correct. Terry said the new system was the only electronic system to be approved by the Air Force, and CAFB is one of the first pharmacies in AMC to have this system.

"This system should be universal across the Air Force within a few years," said Terry. Team Charleston's new pharmacy can promote peace of mind, said Terry.

"If a member is deployed, and they know that (their spouse and children) are being taken care of, that's one less thing to worry about," said Terry. "Health care and health prevention is key to our fighting force, and the pharmacy is a large part of that."

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