

AllianceRx Walgreens Prime is the only specialty pharmacy to use a patented process for shipping temperature-sensitive medicine.

Increasing patient safety with patented cold-chain shipment process instills pride among inventors

ORLANDO, Fla., August 6, 2020 – A new patented process for delivering specialty medicine will assure [AllianceRx Walgreens Prime](#) patients receive their medicine delivered at the correct temperature.

AllianceRx Walgreens Prime, one of the nation’s largest specialty and home delivery pharmacies, will exclusively use the patent – held by parent company Walgreens – to help increase patient safety, improve patient outcomes and reduce waste. It is the only specialty pharmacy to offer a patented cold-chain shipment packaging process. In specialty pharmacy, cold-chain distribution refers to the process of shipping medicines that require refrigerated storage. Maintaining the right temperatures is critical to ensuring the efficacy of specialty medications, including costly biologics and injectables, which have special storage or temperature requirements.

Ed Musisko, senior director of data science and analytics at AllianceRx Walgreens Prime, feels a certain pride around having helped develop the patented process so patients receive their medicine safely. When family members ask him to explain the complex cold-chain distribution patent, Musisko replies simply: “We customize the medicine’s package based on its shipping experience so when it arrives, it’s safe and effective for our patient.”

Musisko, co-inventor of the application, says almost all specialty drugs have a two- to eight-degree Celsius requirement dictated within the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) product approval. “Our goal was to eliminate the potential for medicine going bad, which can impact the patient. It also prevents the need to reship orders, which is wasteful and costly. This application enables us to predict the experience of the shipment, then adjust packaging to prevent harm to the medicine, and ultimately to the patient’s treatment plan,” he says.

Historically, specialty pharmacies have shipped medicine via *universal pack out* (accommodates wide range of temperatures but costly in terms of materials and shipping) or *seasonal pack out* (less expensive but can only handle temperatures for a specific season). Shipping via refrigerated trucks, while also effective, is cost-prohibitive.

Dan Shandel, senior process analyst and co-inventor, brought the concept to life by transitioning the newly-developed engineering algorithms and processes to the pharmacy team interface. Testing of the application took place at AllianceRx Walgreens Prime’s internal packaging test lab, located at its Pittsburgh facility. “We use an environmental chamber that can simulate the package experience during transits,” says Luke Holbrook, manager, engineering and logistics, and co-inventor. For instance, a package’s delivery route could include travel from a cold climate to a hot environment, with stops along the way.

The team also tested the process using International Safe Transit Association (ISTA) 7E standards to ensure the packaging procedures adhere to the manufacturer’s storage guidelines. These are the industry testing standards that thermal transport packaging uses in parcel delivery system shipment.

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The new patented process also reduces waste and eliminates reship needs. In fact, AllianceRx Walgreens Prime anticipates a significant annual savings in reship costs. However, Musisko and Holbrook say the ultimate benefit is patient safety. “With this algorithm, we can select the best packaging for each individual order. While this process will have substantial financial benefit, ultimately the pride I carry on this patent is wrapped around patient safety and care,” says Musisko.

“Our whole premise was to reliably deliver a stable product,” says Musisko. “AllianceRx Walgreens Prime continues to use innovation, technology, and process improvements to enhance how we service specialty pharmacy patients. We continue to make strides to find efficient methods to help keep our patients safe, happy and healthy.”

About AllianceRx Walgreens Prime

AllianceRx Walgreens Prime delivers maintenance and specialty medicines through its home delivery and specialty pharmacies. Formed in 2017 through a strategic alliance between Walgreens, one of the nation’s largest chain drug stores, and Prime Therapeutics, a leading pharmacy benefit manager (PBM), the company offers tools and resources to help patients improve medication adherence, 24/7 pharmacy support for exceptional care. The company is headquartered in Orlando, Fla. and its pharmacies are accredited by several national pharmacy accreditation services. Visit www.alliancerxwp.com for more information.

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