

Success



2008 NCPA DIGEST
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PHIL LaFOY, RPh



TOWN DEMOGRAPHICS • ALCOA, TENNESSEE	
Total Population	8,463
Education	
High School Grad or Higher	78 percent
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18.6 percent
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.4 percent
Income (Median 2005)	\$37,700

For more than 25 years, Blount Discount Pharmacy has been a staple of Blount County, located just south of Knoxville, Tennessee. With four stores within five miles of each other, Blount Discount Pharmacies have pretty much “saturated the market,” as owner Phil LaFoy, RPh, likes to say.

“This is our community and we love it,” LaFoy said. “We live here. We go to church here. Our kids are or have been involved in all areas of school activities. We’re a part of the personal side of our customers.”

Blount Discount Pharmacy is involved with seemingly every community event going in Alcoa and Maryville, where their four stores are located. They sponsor high school sports teams and tournaments, fundraisers and charity races; whatever they can do for the small towns they love.

But beyond all that, LaFoy and his two partners—Terry Webb, RPh and Aaron Clark, RPh—and their staff of 85, provide innovative and invaluable services to their patients. Among the services outside of filling traditional prescriptions, Blount Discount Pharmacy compounds hormone replacement therapy and veterinary medications, among many other products.

They also offer a drug packaging system called Medicine on Time. It is a unit-of-use packaging system that uses bubble packaging for a month’s worth of medication with color-coding, so the patient or caregiver knows what time of day to take their medications.

“We do this a lot with assisted living facilities, but also in the home,” LaFoy said. “A lot of parents are getting older in the community and their children are looking for ways to help them stay independent and in their homes.”

Additionally, Blount Discount Pharmacy employs one pharmacy technician dedicated solely to trouble-shooting patient issues—Medicare issues in particular. She is known in the community for her willingness to help patients work through their paperwork and questions and won’t rest until everything is squared away.

Understanding the industry and the continuing shift towards filling generics prescriptions, LaFoy and his team have implemented their Pharmacy Plus Program—\$18 for 100 generic tablets. They’ve been offering this program since before Medicare Part D.

Blount Discount Pharmacy owners are also strong supporters of advancing of the future of independent pharmacy. They’ve partnered with nearby East Tennessee State University School of Pharmacy as a rotation site. They mentored their first two ETSU students in the summer of 2008, and are excited about helping to groom the next generation of independent pharmacists.

MARK MANDEL, PharmD



MARK DRUGS

Roselle, Illinois

TOWN DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Population	23,174
Education	
High School Grad or Higher	91 percent
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	34 percent
Graduate or Professional Degree	9.6 percent
Income (Median 2005)	\$67,800

Mark Mandel, PharmD, has always enjoyed cooking, and as a compounding pharmacist he sees the parallels between fine dining and effective medications.

“Compounding is like cooking in the sense that you are following a very precise recipe, but with some tweaks along the way,” Mandel says. “It’s just as if you’re making a nice dinner. If you’re making a cream or a lotion that’s going to be cosmetically pleasing, pharmaceutically elegant, and therapeutically appropriate, you can really provide some great benefits for patients, and have a lot of fun and be creative in the process.”

Mandel began cooking up his extensive menu of compounding products in 1987, when he and co-owner Nick Flocco established Mark Drugs in the Chicago suburb of Roselle, Illinois.

It didn’t take long for Mark Drugs to hit its stride with popular compounded products. Among Mandel’s earliest was a product designed for women who had an inability to maintain pregnancy through their first trimester. As other treatment options included injections or suppositories, which a lot of patients found to be painful or inconvenient,

a hard candy progesterone lozenge was created. “With my background in cooking, I knew a little bit about candy temperatures, and with my background in chemistry, I was able to make a palatable compounded product that was therapeutically and clinically appropriate, and that patients didn’t mind using,” Mandel says.

Mandel also tells a particularly emotional story from several years ago. He says a young boy was gravely ill with cancer and was staying in a hospice, and the nurse there called him and asked if there was anything the pharmacy could do ease the child’s nausea. Mandel says that they talked to the boy’s physician and the hospice to get approval for their recommendation, a cream which would treat the nausea and ease the pain. After being approved by the hospice, they delivered it to the patient that same day. Sadly, the boy died about two days later, but Mandel says the child was at least given some quality of life and comfort, if only for a short period.

For Mandel, helping patients will always be his passion. “I tell my kids that if you love what you do, you’ll never work a day in your life,” he says. “Compounding has allowed me to love every day and never have a day of work.”