

EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

Proving the Value of Connected Medication Management Across the Enterprise

Weighing the value of change

Omnicell®

Replacing an established medication management environment is not a small decision. The technology may already be embedded across hundreds of workflows. Pharmacy and nursing teams know how to use it and IT supports it, with processes built up around it and years of investment in training, integration, and infrastructure behind it. Even when leaders can see opportunities to improve, staying with the status quo can look like the less disruptive choice.

That makes the case for modernization more demanding. Leaders need to see whether changing the medication management model can create enough clinical, operational and financial value to justify the effort of getting there, and a list of newer capabilities likely will not influence that decision on its own. The change management involved in that transition is part of the calculation as well.

The potential value of modernization should outweigh its potential disruption.

Start With the Possible Benefits

A modernization program can involve new automation, software, integrations, and infrastructure. Those features are typically a means to an end. The focus should be placed on outcomes, rather than features and functionalities. Will medications be easier to access when they are needed? Will pharmacy teams have better information about inventory and utilization? Can unnecessary steps be removed from nursing workflows? Can repetitive manual work be reduced? Can leaders see performance across locations rather than piecing it together facility by facility?

Questions like these move the evaluation away from technology features and onto how the medication-management environment actually performs.

A 2024 time-and-motion study[1] across four clinical specialties found that after implementation of automated dispensing cabinets (ADCs), the average number of locations nurses visited to obtain medications fell significantly, from 1.73 to 1.04. On the surgical ward, mean medication retrieval time fell from 98.1 seconds to 47.2 seconds. Across all four specialties, however, the overall reduction in retrieval time was not statistically significant.

The mixed results show that technology may change the conditions behind the work, but on its own can't determine whether the workflow is improved.

> Modernization provides value when improvement shows up in the workflow.

Reduce Unnecessary Work

For health systems under workforce pressure, productivity cannot simply mean asking people to absorb more work. Where is the operating model consuming skilled time unnecessarily?

A missing medication can set off a search, a call, or a request. Inventory in the wrong place can create additional movement, manual processes consume pharmacy time, and disconnected information can leave people moving between systems to reconstruct a view that should already be available.

Repeated across a health system, these small inefficiencies frequently become part of the cost of operating the medication management environment.

North Kansas City Hospital was already using Omnicell medication management automation but identified manual inventory processes, stockouts, and medication requests as sources of operational inefficiency.

The hospital introduced Omnicell's Inventory Optimization Service, using real-time inventory analytics and guidance from a dedicated clinical strategist to adjust stock levels and improve medication availability on nursing units. By ensuring commonly requested medications were already available where needed, the hospital reduced requests to central pharmacy from an average of 35 per day to fewer than seven.

Over four months, the hospital eliminated approximately 1,200 medication requests, reduced stockouts by approximately 10%, and increased nursing satisfaction by 7%.

Those figures are not a forecast for any other organization. However, they may demonstrate a link between changes to inventory management and changes that pharmacy and nursing teams could experience in everyday work.[2]



Turn Workforce Pressure into a Work-Design Question

Pharmacy faces the same issue. When skilled staff spend time on repetitive picking, repackaging, inventory activity, or other work that can be automated or redesigned, doing those tasks faster is often only part of the answer. The bigger opportunity may be redirecting some of that effort.

At Owensboro Health, pharmacy leaders were dealing with scarce technician labor as existing technology approached end of life. The organization evaluated its future medication-distribution model with nursing workflow, medication safety, scalability, and pharmacy workload among its requirements.

Following implementation of Omnicell's Central Pharmacy Dispensing Service and XR² Automated Central Pharmacy System, Owensboro automated up to 95% of cart fill and up to 50% of automated dispensing cabinet fill, cut manual picks by more than half, and reduced unit-dose repackaging staffing by 90%. Night-shift technicians were reallocated to higher-value work including IV preparation, medication reconciliation, and medication delivery to nursing units.[3]

> The real potential workforce opportunity is deciding where your staff adds the most value.

Make Operational Value Visible

Modernization is also a chance to rethink how medication inventory is managed across the organization. In a complex health system, inventory may be distributed across hospitals, pharmacies, clinics, and other care environments. When information remains fragmented, teams can be left managing individual locations rather than understanding patterns across the wider system.

With better visibility, leaders can start asking:

- Where is inventory actually being used?
- Where are stockouts recurring?
- Where is medication sitting unused?
- Where do par levels no longer reflect demand?
- Where are different facilities solving the same problem in different ways?

Answering these questions can connect medication management decisions to operational and financial performance.

At Baptist Health Alabama, pharmacy teams were managing medication inventory separately across facilities, with reordering decisions often based on visual checks rather than reliable usage data. By implementing Omnicell Intelligence Solutions, the health system gained greater visibility into medication inventory across its hospitals, enabling pharmacy teams to make more informed purchasing decisions, reduce excess stock, and share medications between facilities.

In less than three months, Baptist Health achieved nearly $425,000 in medication inventory savings, reduced on-hand inventory by approximately $800,000, decreased days on hand by 39%, and increased inventory turns by 59%.

The numbers are specific to one health system, but the principle behind them should apply more widely:

> Visibility can give leaders a better basis for deciding where medication inventory is needed and where practices can be improved.

Compare the Risk of Change to the Risk of Standing Still

The incumbent environment typically has one obvious advantage: people know it. Processes, integrations, training, and support structures have developed around it, and replacing that environment can introduce short-term demands on pharmacy, nursing, IT, and operational teams. Those demands are real and belong in the decision.

Maintaining an established environment also means maintaining the workflows, manual work, inventory practices, visibility limitations, and operational complexity associated with it. If those conditions no longer support the organization's medication management goals, then change may be necessary.

> If change is needed then, the goal should be to minimize the disruption a transition to a more modernized medication management environment may place on your organization.

Make the Transition Part of the Decision

A strong business case for modernization is incomplete if it describes the destination without explaining how the organization can get there.

Medication management technology sits inside everyday clinical work. Change can involve hardware, software, integrations, inventory movement, training, workflow redesign, and the coordination of multiple teams and locations, so implementation should belong in the value discussion from the start.

Texas Children's Hospital needed to replace 256 Omnicell cabinets across three campuses without interrupting patient care. It began at a smaller satellite campus and worked with Omnicell to refine a five-step conversion process before extending the approach across the wider system. Individual cabinet swaps were completed in approximately 20 minutes and the three-campus conversion was completed with minimal disruption to patient care and pharmacy operations.

While the 20-minute figure notable, the approach is what is more important: start small, learn, refine, and scale.[4]

> Confidence grows when implementation is something the organization designs and improves, rather than something it endures.



Define Value Before the Change Begins

If modernization has to earn its disruption, the organization needs to know what success will look like before implementation begins.

Installation milestones matter: systems deployed, integrations completed, users trained, facilities converted. They show that change happened, but not, on their own, that it created value.

Depending on the organization's priorities, a broader view might include:

- Medication availability and stockouts
- Medication requests
- Inventory levels, utilization, and waste
- Manual work and replenishment activity
- Nursing and pharmacy workflow
- User experience and adoption
- Variation across locations
- Operational and financial performance
- Implementation progress and disruption
- The ability to sustain improvements after deployment

Not every measure needs to become an enterprise KPI. What matters is a clear line from the original reasons for modernization to evidence of what outcomes were realized afterward.

> Measurement can tell you whether the change was worth it.

Change Worth Making

Perhaps the strongest case for medication management modernization is creating a more efficient and better performing environment for your pharmacists, clinicians, and patients.

Evaluating this impact begins by looking at the work clinicians and pharmacy teams perform every day, and with understanding where inventory, information, and skilled time are being used. It requires establishing what better performance should look like for your organization, then measuring whether it occurred. Implementation confidence belongs in the value proposition too, rather than being left as a problem to solve after the technology decision has been made.

Omnicell's medication management portfolio brings together automation, software, services, and inventory capabilities intended to support medication management across care settings. Its evolving OmniSphere strategy is intended to provide a connected technology foundation for medication management across the enterprise.

Whether an incumbent technology still performs its function is often only part of the decision. Leaders also should judge whether the medication management environment is delivering the performance the organization needs today, what measurable value a different model could create, and whether there is a credible path for getting there.

> Change is worth making when there is evidence that meaningful outcomes can be achieved.



Questions Worth Discussing

- Where is the current medication management environment creating unnecessary work?
- Which pharmacy and nursing workflows would need to improve for modernization to prove its value?
- Where could better medication visibility and inventory management create measurable operational or financial value?
- What does maintaining the current environment require the organization to continue accepting?
- What would pharmacy, nursing, and IT need from an implementation approach to have confidence in the transition?
- Before modernization begins, what measures would tell leadership afterward that the change was worth making?

Contact your Omnicell representative to discuss how you can create an enterprise medication management operating model for your organization.

About Omnicell

Omnicell helps health systems to create more connected medication management environments through enterprise visibility, interoperable cloud technology, standardized workflows, and operational intelligence.

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