

KL60 Handles TriMaxx® Vial Perfectly

Carolina Family Health Centers, Wilson, NC



Summary

Laura Owens, PharmD and director of pharmacy for the Carolina Family Health Centers, spent a significant amount of time and energy converting her 340B pharmacy to the Tri State TriMaxx vial. Next on her punch list was finding the right robotic dispenser that could automate the unique 3-sided vial. "I was relieved to find the KL60 handled the TriMaxx. I was even more pleased when we installed it and saw how well it fit our needs," says Ms. Owens. But here was the best part: the KL60TM was even easier to operate than she and her staff expected. "I thought I was going to have to invest a ton of time on a robot. This KL60 needs a maximum of 10 or 15 minutes a day," she says.

Setting

Carolina Family Health Centers is part of the Wilson Community Health Center in eastern North Carolina. Its focus is on 340B pharmacy. This agricultural area is also known for its unique barbecue style.

- Daily Rx volume: Average 375 with peaks up to 600
- Staff: Typical shift is 2 pharmacists and 2 techs

Challenges

Two factors coincided at Carolina Family Health Centers. First, the daily prescription volume had risen to the point that Ms. Owens was considering automating with a robot. "We had no automation, just a lot of hand-counting!" she says. Meanwhile, the health center's physicians led the charge to convert to the Tri Maxx 3-sided vial, in an effort to simplify the label information for patients. "We put quite a bit of time and effort into the conversion. It was important that any automation we chose would be compatible with the TriMaxx vial," says Ms. Owens. However, the 3-sided vial presented an engineering challenge to other robotics manufacturers – no robot could dispense it.

Solution

In 2012, Kirby Lester successfully modified its compact KL60 robot to accommodate the TriMaxx. "We were thrilled to find that the KL60 was the only robot that could handle the vial. On top of that fact, the KL60 was just the right size and seemed simple to use," says Ms. Owens. The KL60 interfaced perfectly to QS/1, and the pharmacy was running prescriptions from Day 1. "It even applies labels better than a human can. Each one is perfectly straight."

Results

- 1. Efficiency and Accuracy:** Competition is fierce - Ms. Owens knows her patients choose her facility because prescriptions are out quickly and accurately every time. "The KL60 brought us to a new level," she says.
- 2. Techs Love KL60:** The staff was surprised at the simple operation and low maintenance. "A tech might spend 10-15 minutes a day to make sure the vials and cassettes are full. Maybe a time or two during the day to adjust something. That's it," she says. "It's conceptually a very easy machine."
- 3. Eliminate Hand-Counting:** The pharmacy dispenses a high number of 90-day fills. Having the KL60TM automatically count out 180 or 270 tablets versus tray-counting has been an important time- and labor-saver.
- 4. Immediate Impact:** From the very first day, the KL60TM handled 37% of the pharmacy's total orders. "That's even before we started tweaking our processes. I am confident our efficiency will continue to escalate with the KL60," says Ms. Owens.
- 5. Automates the Tri State TriMaxx:** "You might think the KL60 was an obvious decision because of the vials, but I compared it to other robots. The KL60 won on its merits," says Ms. Owens.

A pharmacy technician processes scripts with the KL60TM (below)



"The KL60 has quickly become my technicians' best friend! Last week, for instance, it dispensed 6,000 metformin over a 3-day stretch, which saved my technician the monotony of counting out 6,000 tablets by hand. She gained the freedom to operate where she is most effective – in front of the patient."

Laura Owens, PharmD/DoP
Carolina Family Health Centers