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Creative Strategies sees growth with medication-delivery system

Business First of Louisville - by [Ben Adkins](#) Business First Staff Writer

In less than a year, Louisville-based Creative Strategies US has more than quadrupled the number of clients using its Accu-Flo system.

And John Carroll, the company's president and CFO, said the added clients potentially could double the company's revenue.

Formerly marketed as eMedPass, the system officially was launched in January 2007 as a computerized medication administration system for institutional pharmacies and assisted-living, long-term care and rehab facilities.

The mobile computer system automates several processes previously recorded on paper. Recently, the system has undergone a number of enhancements and has been rebranded as Accu-Flo. Creative Strategies also offers technology and consulting services.

Carroll, who designed the system, said three pharmacies were using the technology as of last summer. That list of clients has grown to 17 pharmacies that will serve 28 facilities once the systems are installed during the next couple of months.

Reduced competition leads to client growth

Carroll said Creative Strategies does some marketing of the Accu-Flo system, such as attending trade shows, but the system's reputation has spread largely by word of mouth.

In addition, he said, a medication-management system produced by competitor Artromick Inc. was pulled off the market, allowing Creative Strategies to seize some of that client base.

"The worst thing that can happen is to take a facility from electronic back to paper," he said.

Technology eliminates paper trail

Carroll said the Accu-Flo system costs about \$12,000 to manage medication for a "typical 100-bed facility." But Carroll said the system can be modified for smaller facilities, serving 20 to 30 residents or larger ones serving 500 or more.

In addition to the initial purchase, the pharmacy also would be responsible for a \$3.90 charge per licensed bed per day and a fee for each facility the pharmacy serves.

Carroll said pharmacies might pass some of these costs on to the facilities. But he said the system also saves facilities \$1,500 or more each month by updating medication records electronically.

Updating the records manually would require additional facility staff members to verify the accuracy of the lists -- a process Carroll said might take two or three days each month.

Louisville-based PCA Pharmacy, which serves 74 facilities in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio, began using the Accu-Flo system in one of its facilities late last year and added another at the start of 2008.

PCA Pharmacy president Dave Wren said the system will be added in an additional two facilities this month, and he expects that a total of 10 or 12 facilities will be using the system by the end of 2008.

He said the pharmacy eventually plans to extend the Accu-Flo system to all of the facilities it serves.

"It saves an inordinate amount of nursing time in handling the paperwork," Wren said. "It has proven to be very valuable."

Recent system improvements include the ability to schedule automated software updates during off-peak hours. The newest version of the system also features a prompt that appears on the system's screen for one hour before and one hour after a patient is scheduled to receive a medication.

If the medication is not administered during that two-hour time frame, a prompt appears on the screens of multiple systems in a facility, notifying employees that the drug had not been given to the patient.

Carroll said he constantly looks for ways to improve the Accu-Flo system, and he visits at least one facility each month to get feedback from nurses and doctors about the system.

System expected to continue driving company growth

The company is in the final stages of contract negotiations with five additional pharmacies, Carroll said.

The number of employees at Creative Strategies has grown to 14, up from four at the beginning of last year. Carroll said the company still is hiring and expects to end the year with about 30 employees.

Carroll said Creative Strategies brought in \$2 million in revenue last year. He hopes the company's income will grow to \$30 million in the next five years and top \$80 million within a decade.

Creative Strategies US

President and CFO: John Carroll

Key product: Accu-Flo, a computerized medication administration system

Employees: 14

Location: 2400 Envoy Circle

Web site: www.creativestrategiesus.com