



## Fairview Specialty Pharmacy Has The Prescription For Platform Integration

## Fairview Pharmacy

### Innovation and Integration

Integration of specialty pharmacy patient information across the pharmacy dispensing system, electronic medical record (EMR), patient communications application and shipping vendor – and more – seems like an impossible dream. Each of the platforms are seemingly created as separate and discrete systems with some having APIs of, somewhat, dubious value. To be fair, with the multitude of software platforms available, it is nearly impossible for an API to easily integrate across all platforms. There are just too many variables.

On the other hand, getting all these disparate systems to “talk” with one another has clear benefits for the specialty pharmacy including less duplication of effort, greater efficiency and creation of a “single point of truth” for patient data and interactions.

One health systems’ effort to make the platform integration “dream” a reality is underway. After some initial pivots, Fairview Specialty Pharmacy, part of Fairview Health System, is writing itself a prescription for integration success.

### A Prescription For Integration

Fairview Health Services is an award-winning, nonprofit, integrated health system with 34,000+ employees and network of 5,000+ providers based in the upper Midwest. Its specialty pharmacy services over 11,000 patients at any one time. Fairview Specialty Pharmacy is one of the many health system owned specialty pharmacies that are a [Health System Owned Specialty Pharmacy Alliance \(HOSP\)](#) member.

The culture at Fairview Specialty Pharmacy is focused on continually looking for ways to create more efficiencies in service delivery across the entire organization. In larger specialty pharmacies like Fairview, one, small innovation or change can have a massive positive impact that ripples across the entire organization.

Fairview Specialty Pharmacy’s platform integration project is having just that kind of impact.





## Unprecedented Visibility For Better Efficiency

The platform integration project was part of a strategic plan to innovate and improve operational efficiencies to support better patient care leading to better patient outcomes. The project began with the integration of the health system's EMR with the specialty pharmacy's patient management software. The main challenge confronting the Fairview integration team was understanding the IT side of things. It was like learning a new language – and then translating that language into actionable specialty pharmacy operations.

The ongoing results of this platform integration effort show an up to 50% reduction in duplication of various patient data recording. A single patient entry in the specialty pharmacy's patient management system can now proliferate into the EMR, eliminating the need for duplicate entries for patients where documentation was occurring in both platforms, and enabling provider visibility for patients where documentation in the EMR had not been previously occurring. It's about consistency across all applications with each system that is being used, whether in the pharmacy or clinic, containing the same information. The net effect of this ongoing platform integration project is an improvement in communications with clinics and providers leading to Fairview Specialty Pharmacy being able to provide a greater level of care with improved efficiency.

One unexpected benefit of the platform integration is that it also more easily allowed for the collection and delivery of status updates to providers about the work Fairview Specialty Pharmacy was doing for their patients.

In short, Fairview Specialty Pharmacy can now see the contacts or "touches" a patient has experienced at Fairview Health Services from the first appointment to labs and pharmacy interactions. Fairview's integration of patient information is proving to be an efficient way to give healthcare professionals and providers a holistic view of the patient.

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## One Clinic At A Time

The Fairview Specialty Pharmacy team started the integration project with M Health Fairview's Gastrointestinal Clinic. At the time of the pilot, the specialty pharmacy team was double documenting clinical assessment details for these patients in both the EMR and patient management system, so converging into an integrated platform made a lot of sense to reduce clinician documentation time while maintaining clinic expectations. The second clinic to go live was the Cystic Fibrosis Clinic, where the team had not been consistently documenting assessment details into the EMR, offering the benefit of provider visibility that had not previously existed. Now, after a specialty pharmacist determines that a patient is struggling with adherence or not tolerating their medication, a note is filed and instantly routed to the clinic team to provide awareness and visibility into the situation and subsequent actions taken by the specialty pharmacy team. Fairview delivers this type of efficient results on a daily basis, thanks in part, to platform integration.





## Future Roadmap

This first step towards interoperability is only the tip of the iceberg. To start, the current integration between the EMR and patient management system is one-directional. Ideally, Fairview will get to a point where clinical information from the EMR flows into the patient management system as well. In addition, the existing integration between the dispensing system and patient management system has room for improvement. It is important that the pharmacy team continue to vocalize and advocate for functionality needs to make these integrations as beneficial as possible.

Along with continued refinement of the existing integration, the team at Fairview Specialty Pharmacy continues to explore additional integration opportunities. Among the list is Fairview's patient communication tool, which engages with patients via a text message that then connects them to a HIPAA secure web space. The ideal state is a full integration of the patient communication tool with Fairview Specialty Pharmacy's dispensing system and shipping platform, allowing the patient to see the status of their prescription live at every step throughout the process. The question remains – if my favorite pizza joint can show me when my pie is coming out of the oven, why don't I have a pharmacy app to show me when my medication is being filled? We have a long way to go in specialty pharmacy and healthcare in terms of patient facing applications and leveraging technology to improve patient engagement and provide self-service functionality. Integration and interoperability across vendors in the specialty pharmacy space are key to making this vision a reality. Fairview is committed to keeping these conversations front and center as it continues to explore opportunities to enhance patient care through technology.

## About HOSP

The Health System Owned Specialty Pharmacy Alliance ([HOSP](https://hospalliance.org/)) is a network of leading health systems and the businesses that support them who advocate for the better patient care and outcomes associated with fully integrated health system specialty pharmacies. HOSP believes that health systems are best positioned to provide the highest quality care to their specialty patients in the outpatient setting. HOSP advocates for and develops industry best practices to ensure that onsite health system specialty pharmacy operations have gold standard care models of excellence.

For more information: <https://hospalliance.org/>

## Devil in The Details

Platform integration was a trial-and-error process for Fairview Specialty Pharmacy, to some extent. In that process they learned quite a bit. Below are some useful tips for those contemplating a similar integration project:

- Attend weekly IT meetings and learn about the coding. Also, learn the language of IT so you can understand what they are working on, the status updates and testing.
- Be skeptical of vendors who say they can integrate with anyone. Always verify that both vendors are willing to integrate first. Check the API by finding out what fields each company can send and receive because you might have an integration, but it might not be the right fields that get integrated.
- Experience counts. Seek out others who have done it before and best practices. Organizations like the Health System Owned Specialty Pharmacy Alliance are a good place to start for that kind of information.
- Start the integration process with the "friendlies" – the internal organizations you have a good relationship with – and rollout the integration clinic by clinic. Publicize internally each success.

HOSP general membership is open to any qualified health system that seeks to embrace the organization's mission. For information about member qualifications, membership dues and how to join: <http://hospalliance.org/membership/>. HOSP partnership opportunities are also now available.