

## Case Study

### **Pharmacists Look to Satellites to Better Help their Patients**

Independent pharmacies are the latest market segment to enjoy the benefits of on-line broadband connectivity offered by satellite. They join companies from hospitality, restaurant, convenience store and retail industries that have used broadband satellite solutions to handle a broad range of mission critical activities for the last 15 years.

In recent years, small-town independent pharmacies have seen increasing competition from larger chain stores boasting more products and larger buying power. Traditional powerhouses like Walgreens are creating smaller store formats to address smaller markets. These new competitors also use an arsenal of technology tools to manage store operations faster and more efficiently.

To help the independent pharmacy, Cardinal Health has created a technology infrastructure through its portal and through teaming with Hughes Network Systems, Inc. (HNS) to offer DIRECWAY® broadband satellite services. These efforts will help level the playing field for independent pharmacies by providing access to applications and communications infrastructure that improves business processes and operations.

#### ***The Solution—A Win for Independent Pharmacies and Cardinal Health***

Because they are smaller in size, independent pharmacies have had to look for ways to gain the upper-hand by enhancing their patient services. Fast and reliable network connections providing access to applications like claims adjudication and Cardinal.com for ordering are key to freeing-up the pharmacist to work directly with patients, instead of handling back-office operations.

For independent pharmacies, the benefits of using DIRECWAY include:

- Rapid prescription processing—typically 75 percent faster than dial-up service
- More reliable prescription processing connection; dropped connections from dial-up service can frustrate pharmacists and patients
- Quick always-on access to the Cardinal.com intranet to make replenishing inventory simple and fast
- More time for pharmacists to spend with patients, tending to their needs and enhancing the relationship

#### ***Mill Street Drug—An Independent Pharmacy Success Story***

Mill Street Drug, a busy independent pharmacy in Bayfield, Colorado is a perfect example of this business trend. Serving a rural community in the southwest part of the state, nine months ago Mill Street Drug dropped its slow and often unreliable dial-up prescription processing system in favor of DIRECWAY.

“Since we replaced our dial-up modem with DIRECWAY, we have experienced improved network reliability and faster prescription processing, which enables us to spend more time with our patients,” said Mary O’Donnell, owner of Mill Street Drug.

“We typically process more than 120 prescriptions each day and 60-70 of these transactions are processed online. DIRECWAY enables us to complete these online transactions in as few as five seconds, a small fraction of the time spent with dial-up service,” added O’Donnell. “When prescriptions are processed faster, patients are happier and we can focus our attention to meeting their health and wellness needs.”

DIRECWAY also provides Mill Street Drug with always-on access to the Cardinal.com intranet, providing them with quick and reliable access to a wide range of Cardinal Health pharmacy products. “Managing our store inventory is easier than ever with our DIRECWAY satellite network and Cardinal Health’s intranet,” said O’Donnell.

### ***Operational Benefits***

Serving independent pharmacies nationwide, Cardinal Health needed an integrated communications solution that could efficiently and reliably serve a geographically dispersed user community that is mostly in small towns; places where broadband is not likely to be available from the phone company. Recognizing the benefits that broadband satellite solutions bring to independent pharmacies, Cardinal Health recognized satellite as the right solution and selected DIRECWAY services for its user community following the successful completion of trials at several retail pharmacies.

“We see DIRECWAY satellite service as an important tool that can help independent pharmacists step toe-to-toe with larger competitors.” said Ken Cohen, assistant vice president at HNS. “Working with Cardinal has helped us create the right always-on communications package to serve this community and we look forward to being part of the solution. One of the more exciting benefits of DIRECWAY services in this program is that it is central to freeing-up the pharmacist so that there is more time to answer patients’ questions.”

DIRECWAY is ideally suited to help independent pharmacists address a growing list of networking and prescription processing challenges. Equally important, DIRECWAY satellite service is a cost effective solution that can be quickly deployed everywhere.

While the independent pharmacy faces a changing marketplace, pharmacists play an important role in serving the patients in their communities. HNS and Cardinal Health are committed to providing the tools to help them fulfil this important mission.