



Schnucks Opens Hospital Pharmacy

[Alyssa Haak](#)

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Schnuck Markets' first stand-alone specialty pharmacy located within St. John's Hospital here fills patient prescriptions before they are discharged.

The pharmacy will focus on those with chronic diseases such as HIV, autoimmune disorders and cancer.

"Often the medications that treat these conditions are expensive, require special storage conditions and need prior approval from insurance providers," said Schnucks pharmacy supervisor David Chism.

Ginger Ertel, St. John's director of pharmacy, said the hospital looked at a number of pharmacies but Schnucks was most willing to help. "We needed to do something for the patients and while we weren't equipped for retail, we had the space," Ertel said.

Schnucks spokeswoman Lori Willis said the partnership is an extension of the company's Healthy Living platform.

"Our company regularly partners with health care providers to help fill any gaps in services that may exist in the neighborhoods we serve," she said.

The 2,000-square-foot pharmacy will be open to the public and operate like any Schnucks pharmacy.

For patients and their families, the in-hospital location will make it easy to get their medications before they even leave their rooms.

"During the discharge process, [pharmacists] make sure the patients and family understand how to administer the medications," Ertel said. "When they get discharged, they don't feel good yet or it's at evening hours. Now they can understand and start right away."

Bob Gorland, vice president at Matthew P. Casey & Associates, said he had never heard of a similar partnership but couldn't see any downside.

"Besides trying to get pharmacy revenues, the hospital can maintain that the patient fills the prescription," he said. "There are a certain number that never get filled, whether the patient lost it, laziness or not wanting to put out the extra dollars."

The program is still in its pilot phase in the orthopedic wing. The plan is to extend the bedside education program to the other hospital wings.

And for all the benefits to patients, there is the opportunity for Schnucks to obtain a new customer.

"It's potentially a plus for Schnucks to be able to get in there and get the exposure first," Gorland said.