Solution: **Improvements in Medication Safety through Standardized Medication Bin Labeling**

**Organization:** University of Maryland Medical Center  
**Type:** Acute Care Specialty Hospital Long Term Care

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**IDENTIFICATION:**  
There was inconsistent medication bin labeling nomenclature within and among satellite pharmacies. Examples of inconsistencies include:

- Generic versus brand names
- Abbreviations
- Dose strength inconsistencies
- Lack of conformity with PharmNet® (medication order entry system), and the OmniCell® (automated dispensing cabinets) nomenclature

The problem was identified by staffing personnel, difficulty in pulling medications, errors in pulling medications, and delays in filling orders.

Baseline data: anecdotal, as reported by personnel in different satellites.

**PROCESS:**  
The solution was based on the concept of standardization of protocols across multiple practice sites, and implementation of best practices.

**SOLUTION:**  
A decision was made to adopt the PharmNet® and OmniCell® drug nomenclature to labeling of medication bins.

A commercially available label generation program was used to create and print medication bin labels.

The characteristics, specifications, and parameters for the various components of a bin label were clearly defined and enforced, such as font size, type, and label information format, for example:

```
Aluminum Hydroxide/
Magnesium Hydroxide/
Simethicone
Oral Susp UD Cup
1200 mg-1200 mg-120 mg/30 mL
```
The new label format is generic name first, then dosage type, and then dosage strength. A Policy and Procedure has been written with a step by step guide for creation of the label database, maintenance, printing, and placement of labels. An implementation owner has been identified.

The new labeling program was piloted in one small section of one of our satellite pharmacies. The results from this pilot are satisfactory and achieve consistency in bin labeling in conformation with the PharmNet® nomenclature across all in-patient pharmacy satellites where medications are stored in storage bins.

A maintenance owner, in conjunction with area Managers and Lead Technicians, will be responsible for compliance and adherence to this protocol. Monitoring and inspection of the bin labels will be made part of scheduled, periodic, check lists and process audits.