CareSuite®
By QuickMAR®

WHY AN eMAR?

Why eMAR can make all the difference at your care facility.

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AN INTRODUCTION

It has been over a decade since we first launched our electronic MAR. At the time, we had no idea that QuickMAR would grow to become the industry leader and the world's most popular eMAR. Because I have spent so much time working on our eMAR, the benefits of an eMAR are clear and obvious. That's why I am still amazed when I consider the fact that our biggest competitor is still paper. I read an article recently stating that only about 25% of the assisted living facilities in the country are even using an EHR. That just shocks me. Yet it also excites me, because it means there is still so much opportunity for our company to make a difference in the world, as we convert people to a better way of providing care.

With that background, I want to provide you with a primer on the basics of an eMAR, and why you should adopt one right now.

WHAT AN EMAR CAN DO FOR YOU

For many caregivers, medication is the most important, most time consuming, and most stressful part of their job. It is stressful for several reasons.

- A resident's health and wellness depend on getting the med pass correct.

- Most folks passing meds are not licensed, nor are they trained medical practitioners, yet they have been delegated a tremendous responsibility.

- Surveyors spend a tremendous amount of time focusing on meds. As a result, many of the findings and citations from survey are med related.

- For some busy med passes, it is a very hectic and harried period, trying to get a large quantity of med passed within the desired time frame.

THE TYPICAL MED PASS

Let me walk you through a typical QuickMAR med pass, so you can see how an eMAR makes your life easier.

Jen is the med tech on the West Wing, and is in the middle of her 8AM med pass.

In QuickMAR, she sees on a single screen all of her residents, and she can tell instantly which ones still have 8AM meds to be given, versus those who have already had their 8AM meds, or have no 8AM meds.

She decides to assist Lester with his meds. She clicks his photo. She is presented with an easy-to-read screen showing all of his 8AM meds.

- The controlled drug is clearly highlighted, cuing her to look in the double-locked Narc box for the med.

- The new medication that was just prescribed two days ago is clearly indicated, which is helpful, as this is Jen's first day back after her days off.

- She can also clearly see the med that was DC'd two days ago while she was gone, helping her stay familiar with Lester's med pass.

- She can see that Lester's Q6 hours PRN pain med was last given at 1:35AM this morning, so she is prepared if he asks for it.

- The QOD (every other day) drug is visible, so Jen knows it is due. Meds appear only on screen on the days they are due.

- She can see that Lester is due for his weekly weight check today.

Jen grabs Lester's blister packs or multi-dose pouches from the med cart. She then scans the barcode for every medication.

- With each successful scan, the med is clearly checked.

- If the wrong med is scanned, the system will very clearly tell her.

- If she forgets a med, the system will very clearly tell her.

Once all the meds are picked, Jen hides the screen using the Privacy button, then goes to see Lester and assist him with the meds.

Returning to the med cart, Jen unhides the screen, then records the results with just a couple of mouse clicks.

- Exceptions, such as "resident refused," are easily noted using a drop-down menu.

- The recorded weight is quickly added.

- For controlled meds, the system tells her how many tablets remain, helping ensure an accurate inventory.

Jen is returned to the list of her residents, and now repeats the process for the other residents.

That's the classic, basic med pass.

Just as important as what Jen did to pass the meds are the things that Jen did **NOT** have to do:

- Thumb through 3-4 pages of meds to identify today's 8AM meds,

- Figure out if the QOD drug is due today,

- Manually enter her initials on every 8AM med that was given,

- Hand write an exception,

- Write a note reminding her to reorder the PRN med she just gave,

- Refer to a separate Drug Reference book or its equivalent, because all of the drug information is available with a single mouse-click in the med pass.

Results

In the end, Jen can complete her busy 8AM med pass in less time, and with much greater accuracy. Some of our customers claim they've reduced the time to complete their busiest med passes by nearly 50%, while also reducing errors.

Other Benefits, Outside the Med Pass

Improved efficiency and accuracy in the med pass are enough to justify an eMAR, but they are not the only benefits.

Compliance

I remember my days as an Administrator in an AL facility, the worry and stress associated with our surveys. We never knew the exact dates for the next survey, but we knew that we would be due so many months after our last survey. I recall the many, many hours I would spend, along with my Med Supervisor, poring over page after page of paper MARs for all our residents for the last 3-4 months, trying so spot any errors- missed meds, mainly. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack. And we could only do this during the small daily windows when the MAR binder was not required for the med pass. And I had only a single med cart to worry about. I imagine you would multiply that proportionally at facilities with multiple med carts spread across a large, multi-story building.

Medication Compliance with an eMAR

Using an eMAR properly will drastically reduce your concerns about the medication part of your next survey.

For one thing, forget about studying scores of MAR sheets looking for holes. QuickMAR can show you in a matter seconds any holes in your MARs for a given time period. What is more, you can run that report for your entire building, from your office, without bothering the Med Aides at the med carts. That alone should be enough for you to adopt an eMAR.

But rather than running that report in advance of an upcoming survey, the best operators take a few minutes every day to review medication issues. Using the QuickMAR dashboard, you can see in a matter of minutes everything you need to know about the medication management in your building:

- A list of all order changes to review,
- Missed meds from yesterday,
- Who has been refusing their meds,
- What PRNs have been given recently,
- Expiring med orders that need to be reordered.

You can also have much of this info summarized and emailed to you in a daily report, if you would like.

By investing just a few minutes each day, you can always be confident about your survey readiness as it pertains to meds.
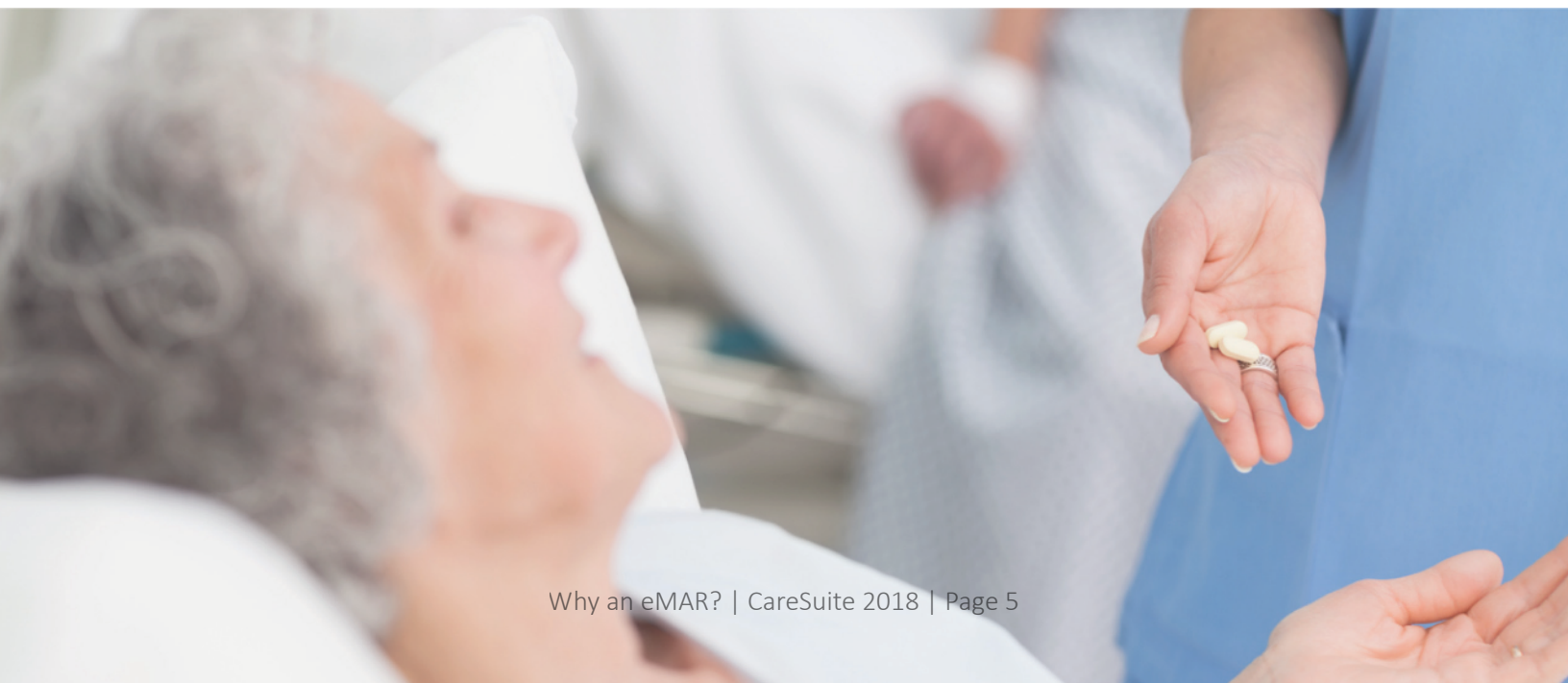
Other Benefits

Do you still rely on printed Physician Order (PO) sheets? If so, you recognize that they are often no longer accurate just days after being printed. With an eMAR, this problem disappears. Print an accurate PO the minute you need it.

For printed MARs, you know that 3-4 days pass between the time the pharmacy prints them to the time you actually start using them. How much time do you spend verifying the next month's MARs are accurate? This problem disappears entirely with an eMAR.

We've all seen how MARs look at the end of the month—initials and handwritten changes everywhere - almost impossible to read. With an eMAR, the MAR is clean and easy to read.

Are your meds delivered on a cycle fill? If so, you probably spend many hours making sure you have all the meds you need for the new cycle. With QuickMAR's Cycle Fill feature, you scan the barcode on each package and you'll know in a matter of minutes if anything is missing.

Is inventory control an issue for you? Is drug diversion a concern? QuickMAR offers a wide variety of options to help you curb the drug diversion problem. See my previous white paper on this.

The benefits of an eMAR are overwhelming.

CONCLUSION

What's keeping you or your colleagues from adopting an eMAR? Fear of technology? Fear of the unknown? Afraid it might not be affordable? Too comfortable with paper? Whatever might be holding you back, you owe it to your residents and your caregivers to take a look. I am confident you'll be convinced.

About CareSuite by QuickMAR

In 2003, co-founder and president, Stan Turner, developed software to improve medication passes at his facilities. Knowing that some caregivers have little technology experience, he designed the software to be easily used by staff with limited computer skills. He also worked with pharmacies over the years to ensure that the software would integrate effortlessly into their operations. The software enabled efficiency and accuracy of the med pass. It also enabled caregivers to dedicate more time and attention to those in their care, while greatly increasing the safety of medication administration.

In 2007, Stan brought together a talented team of professionals to help him establish QuickMAR. Their vision: improve medication accuracy and enhance resident safety by commercializing the product and making it available to the whole industry.

The CareSuite technology rapidly evolved into a leading product that encompasses a range of solutions for long-term care providers and pharmacies, with delighted clients from coast to coast. Each member of the team shares a passionate belief in the importance of quality care for seniors; a passion which guides all their efforts.

Written by Stan Turner, President and Co-Founder

Stan intimately understands the operations, needs and goals of senior care providers and pharmacies. He has more than a decade of experience as an executive director, regional executive and co-owner of an assisted living company. It was while serving in that capacity that he developed the electronic medical administration application that served as the basis for today's robust CareSuite by QuickMAR software. His goal has always been to provide easy-to-use technology that enables senior living providers and pharmacies to improve efficiencies so they can focus on the people they serve.

Prior to entering the senior living industry, Stan served as a business and technology consultant for Deloitte Consulting, where his clients included General Motors, John Deere, Mutual of New York, and Pacific Bell. He previously worked in the aerospace industry, developing and implementing new technologies for General Dynamics. He received an MBA from the University of Notre Dame, where he finished at the top of his class, and a Bachelor of Science in engineering from Brigham Young University.

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