

# Bar Code Labeling Reduces Medication Dispensing, Administration Errors

According to the FDA, approximately 1.3 million Americans a year are killed or injured due to medication errors. Many of these preventable mistakes are caused by incorrect medication dispensing and administration, often due to mislabeled packaging.

Multiple regulatory agencies have initiated a bar code coding requirement for medication to reduce these errors and improve patient safety. The Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals require bar code labeling of all medications and containers where medicines and supplies are set up.

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) issued a 2015 Health-System Pharmacy Initiative, calling for 75 percent of hospitals to use bar coding to verify medications before dispensing and before administration to patients. Stage 2 Meaningful Use requirements established by the Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for Electronic Tracking of Medication also require bar coding as part of an electronic medication administration record (eMAR) system.

Bar code medication administration (BCMA) prevents

human errors to protect patients and promote patient safety. The accuracy of automated bar code technology prevents human errors while improving workflow efficiency. Bar code labels are scanned, verified, and recorded at the exact time and place where medications are administered to patients. BCMA also supports the five rights of medication administration: right patient, right drug, right dose, right route, and right time.

## Ensuring Patient Safety

Hospital pharmacies have options for printing accurate medication-dose bar code labels, including thermal printers. These printers can even come with smart technology allowing them to automatically calibrate without intervention between various label types and sizes. Medication labels are produced utilizing these heat-sensitive thermal printers that allow for accurate scan rates saving pharmacists time and resources.

Finally, medication labeling has specific requirements centered on long-lasting durability. A container that is continually handled, stored in a bathroom or other moist environment, or exposed to abrasion in a purse or backpack must have a reliable label.



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PDC Healthcare, the global leader of innovative identification solutions in partnership with Brother Mobile Solutions, a leader in mobile and label printing technology, launched the new TrustSense Patient ID Printing Solution at the HIMSS 2014 Intelligent Hospital Pavilion.

For more information or to request a free demo unit for your healthcare organization, call 800.543.6144 or visit [www.trustsense.com](http://www.trustsense.com).

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