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New pharmacy ATM revealed in Ontario

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Pharma Kiosk (PK+) lets patients submit prescriptions for later pickup or delivery by affiliated pharmacy

Attendees of the recent Ontario Pharmacists' Association's annual conference had a first-hand look at the latest pharmacy ATM to hit the market.

Pharma Kiosk (PK+), developed by Ontario-based engineering company TCE Group, is a terminal-like machine that lets patients submit their prescriptions via the Internet-enabled service kiosk for later pickup or delivery by the affiliated pharmacy.

Patients swipe their OHIP or driver's license and then answer a few health questions via the touch screen prior to submitting their scripts. A phone is available at the kiosk for direct contact with a pharmacy agent should patients have any questions.

"We came up with the idea about a year and a half ago with an objective to help pharmacies reduce their costs and increase the convenience to their patients," says TCE President Amr Bannis. The fact that the device doesn't store any medication or customer data eliminates security concerns, he adds.

"You can put the kiosk outside the pharmacy when you lock and leave or in a big shopping area on the other end away from the pharmacy. Or even in a busy pharmacy during work hours." The system is customizable and features a security camera to monitor activity at the kiosk 24-hours a day.

Bannis is quick to point out that the device is not intended to take the place of the pharmacist. "It is helping the pharmacist because now the information comes directly to his/her computer system—it will save them time."

PK+ is currently deployed in one Toronto pharmacy and one hospital, as well as in two employers' offices based in the greater Toronto area. "We are also in discussions to have the device implemented in some public areas like Union Station, for example," says Bannis.

Costs of operating a PK+ is estimated to be \$30-\$40 a day.

