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Blount Specialty Pharmacy

Blount County, Tennessee
Phil LaFoy



At Blount Discount County Pharmacy, Inc., in Tennessee, the business was wrestling with a sort of Catch-22 that many other independents face. “Filling prescriptions is our bread and butter. That’s our connection to the community,” co-owner Phil LaFoy, DPh, says. Yet at the same time, many pharmacies are losing money on prescriptions. So in a sense, they can’t afford to do it, but at the same time they can’t afford to not do it. “If we’re not filling prescriptions, we’re toast. That said, if the only thing you are doing is filling prescriptions, you’re toast. So you have to open some new doors.”

Blount Discount County Pharmacy has three retail locations in Blount County (two in Maryville and one in Alcoa). Blount County is near Knoxville in the eastern part of the state. LaFoy (who co-owns the business with fellow Samford University pharmacy graduate Aaron Clark, DPh) says that in mid-2011 the pharmacy was doing Medicine-On-Time packaging in one of its retail locations and looking to possibly expand it into a stand-alone long-term care operation. Around that time, he also became more aware of specialty pharmacy from respected colleagues he serves with on Cardinal Health’s advisory board (Nick Karalis, John Balch, and Angelo Defazio). LaFoy says that consultant Joe Giorno helped Karalis set up the marketing team for Karalis’ specialty pharmacy (Elwyn Specialty Care in Media, Pennsylvania).

“In talking to those guys who were in specialty already, we knew they were affiliated with CSPN [Community Specialty Pharmacy Network]. So we hooked up with CSPN and started educating ourselves on what specialty pharmacy was and what it entailed,” LaFoy says. “Joe came to us and helped walk us through setting it up. We just feel strongly that specialty should be in communities, and should be provided by community pharmacies.”

In June 2012, Blount Specialty Pharmacy opened as a stand-alone business, with an LTC section also sharing the facility. (The three retail stores operate as Blount Discount County Pharmacy. The combined entity [Blount Discount County Pharmacy and Blount Specialty Pharmacy] do business as Blount Discount County Pharmacy, Inc.)

Blount Specialty Pharmacy serves not only Blount County, but patients throughout eastern Tennessee. It also has licenses to deliver medications to patients in Virginia and North Carolina. The disease states it treats include hepatitis C, Crohn’s disease, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, pso-

riasis, and anemia. In July 2014 Blount Specialty Pharmacy dispensed 345 specialty prescriptions alone, and has about 125 specialty patients.

LaFoy says that Blount Specialty Pharmacy uses technology from Therigy LLC to help manage its operations. He also says that the pharmacy received a URAC accreditation on July 1, 2013. He says the URAC process not only gives the pharmacy extra prestige, but from a practical point of view it was essential as many network providers require it.

LaFoy also tries to deflect any credit for the pharmacy’s success, pointing to the efforts of his staff, including his compliance packaging team (Belinda Ellis, PharmD; Cathy Bush, CPhT; Patricia Cable, CPhT; and Donna Silcox, CPhT), specialty pharmacy services professionals (Jennifer Wilson, PharmD; John Peterson, DPh; and patient care coordinator Beth Byerly, CPhT), and marketing representative MaryAnn Riddle.

“They do a tremendous amount of good work, so they deserve to be recognized,” LaFoy says.

DEMOGRAPHICS BLOUNT COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Total Population — **124,177**

Median Household Income
— **\$45,516**

Source: *city-data.com*



Kicking back and wasting time are phrases one wouldn't associate with Robert "Bob" Grisnik. When Grisnik isn't at the pharmacy he owns working diligently with customers, he is volunteering as an active leader in his community. For 48 years Grisnik has stayed busy building his pharmacy business and giving back to the community, a lifestyle he wouldn't trade for anything in the world.

In 1972, Grisnik purchased Southrifty Drug on Main Street in Southampton, on Long Island's south shore, and has since relocated to Jagger Lane. As a Vietnam veteran, Grisnik ran his pharmacy for 28 years while also serving in the Air Force and National Guard, where he eventually retired as a colonel. As a pharmacy owner, Grisnik goes above and beyond for his community in various ways, including sponsoring free health screenings, hosting blood drives, funding scholarships, and assisting with many local school functions. In 2010, he organized a group of 12 pharmacies and a number of local law enforcement agencies that took part in a joint program to take back expired and unwanted pharmaceuticals for proper disposal at no cost to the consumer.

Furthermore, Grisnik is active in many local civic and service organizations. Among these is the Tuckahoe School Board, which he claims as his biggest passion and where he has served for 28 years, presiding as president for many of those years. He is also a member of the Elks Club, Knights of Columbus, Civil Air Patrol, American Legion, the chamber of commerce, the Air Force Association, Combined Veterans Organization, and the Lions Club. He has served as the VFW (Veterans of Foreign War) commander, and fire district commissioner.

Grisnik serves as a true leader to his community and his commitment has not gone unnoticed. In 1992 he received the Bowl of Hygeia Award for his outstanding achievements in the community, and in 1993 he was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree from Long Island University for Outstanding Community Service. He most recently was a finalist for the Cardinal Health Ken Wurster award, which recognizes an independent pharmacist for outstanding contributions to his or her community.

DEMOGRAPHICS SOUTHAMPTON, NEW YORK

Total Population — **3,149**

Median Household Income
— **\$89,360**

Source: *city-data.com*