



Case Study, Pharmacy Jean Coutu, Brigitte Marchand, Catherine Roy et Jean-Christophe Guay

Why bring back the pill dispensers from the prescription preparation center?

Pharmacy Profile

Location: Terrebonne, Quebec

Patients using pill organizers: 310 (2021), 380 (2024)

Previous method: Centralized prescription preparation (2022)

Problem statement

The Centralized Prescription Preparation Center: A Temporary Solution

In 2022, faced with a growing shortage of technical staff and an administrative overload in the dispensary, the owners decided to outsource the production of pill organizers to a centralized prescription preparation center (CPPC). The goal was to free up technical time internally and stabilize operations.

After one year with the centralized center, the experience proved inconclusive. During this period, several recurring issues led the team to reach this conclusion:

1 – Insufficient Traceability

Tracking patient files, managing incidents, and producing modification reports turned into a major administrative burden. The team lost a great deal of time trying to trace records and ensure compliance. In addition, the need to reprint reports following a generic substitution was described by the team as *“a nightmare.”*

2 – Process Rigidity and Lack of Control Over Production

The CPO did not allow the team to get ahead, adapt to daily fluctuations, or prioritize certain patients based on urgency. This rigidity clashed with the day-to-day reality of community pharmacy, which requires flexibility and responsiveness. It was impossible to intervene quickly in cases of generic substitutions, product shortages, or errors. Communication delays between the pharmacy and the CPO further prolonged incident resolution, which jeopardized the quality of patient care and drained the pharmacists' energy.

3 – Complex Management of Narcotics and Controlled Medications

Handling these medications often required manual corrections and additions, leading to wasted time and increased administrative workload. The team constantly had to ensure that the correct labels were available; otherwise, the entire process slowed down.

4 – High Costs

Between March 1, 2022, and February 28, 2023, the invoice for CPO fees was very high. To avoid duplicate verification by the ATP and the pharmacist, pharmacists ended up having to receive, check, and correct the pill organizers themselves. It became clear: the CPO had not reduced the pharmacists' workload, and production would need to be brought back in-house.

Why Opt for the I-Vision?

The I-Vision quickly established itself as the best technological alternative to support the team. Unlike floor-mounted assembly robots, the I-Vision was less expensive, less complex to operate, and was clearly going to free up pharmacists' time. The team was looking for a solution that was:

- Reliable, flexible, and accessible
- Able to free up pharmacists' time
- Ensuring complete traceability
- Highlighting and making the most of staff skills

As Mr. Guay explains: *"It's not the assembly of pill organizers that is costly, it's the verification. In our pharmacy reality, the I-Vision was the device that would most reduce our verification hours for pill organizers. In fact, we will recoup our investment in just three years."*

After visiting a pharmacy already operating the I-Vision, the team implemented the device in June 2023.

Key Benefits

Tangible Time Savings, Week After Week

Thanks to the Smartlab 3.0 solution, assembling pill organizers—which previously took a full week—can now be completed in just four days, representing an 8-hour weekly gain. In verification, DVCC technicians now process 20 pill organizers per hour, effectively doubling their previous efficiency.

Error Reduction and Peace of Mind

The robot’s photo capture feature creates a safety net highly valued by pharmacists. Verification becomes easier and more reliable when the I-Vision provides a clear visual of each pill organizer. The ability to review every image and quickly identify anomalies also strengthens quality control and patient safety. In addition, the V-Assyst system has reduced pill organizer preparation incidents by 50%.

Reduced Operational Stress

The verification task has become far less stressful. Staff are more at ease, and empowering pharmacists to focus on what truly matters: patient care. The system has also helped stabilize work schedules by reducing reliance on extra or overworked staff, which is very costly for the pharmacy. If a pharmacist cannot be on-site to verify pill organizers, no problem—they can work remotely thanks to image-based verification.

Traçabilité inégalée

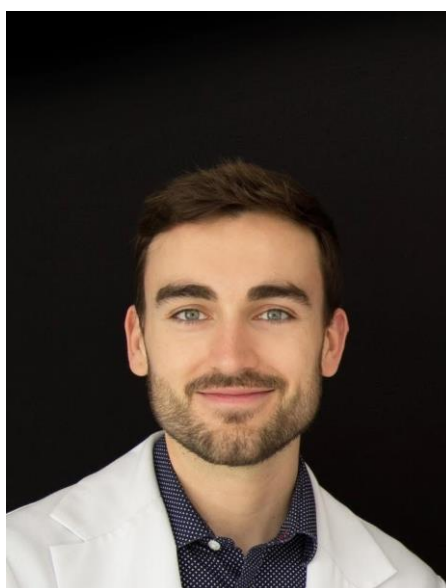
Les photos, les rapports automatisés et les outils de suivi en temps réel permettent une visibilité complète sur le statut des piluliers. Chaque étape est documentée, c’est facile et rapide de retracer une prescription.

Outcomes of the Various Methods Implemented by the Pharmacy				
Blister Packs per Hour	Manual Assembly	En CPO	I-Vision	Improvement
Verification	10	-	20	100%
Assembly	12	-	14	17%
Annual cost of a patient on blister pack	460\$		298\$	54%

Message from the owner

Jean-Christophe Guay, pharmacist and owner

“I-Vision has brought a breath of fresh air to the pharmacy. It’s the best option when you leave a CPO. The I-Vision photo feature is great. The OPQ would be impressed by our new pill dispenser management system if they visited our pharmacy. Since we implemented I-Vision, I find that manual verification has become simply archaic.



« Jean-Christophe Guay »