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TCGRx Launches Innovative Tablet-Splitting Device for Pharmacies and Patients

New Product Lowers Drug Costs and Improves Pharmacy Productivity Compared to Existing Tablet-Splitting Products

Powers Lake, Wis., May 6, 2009 – TCGRx (TCG), one of North America's leading suppliers of pharmacy equipment, today announced the commercial availability of the BullsEye Tablet Splitter, an innovative device that quickly and accurately splits medication with an industry-leading two percent variability between the split halves. Other products on the market frequently crush or split tablets unequally, which may put patient safety at risk. Additionally, existing products are difficult to clean, which can lead to potential contamination of medications. The BullsEye Tablet Splitter can automatically split up to 16 pills per minute and contains a replaceable blade and HEPA filter to decrease potential contamination.

Prescription medication costs comprise approximately 10 percent of national healthcare spending, and are one of the fastest growing elements within the sector. In response, healthcare providers and facilities are developing strategies to keep drug costs under control while providing patients with the best possible care. Because different strengths of medication are often priced similarly, a higher dose is purchased and split in half. Many health insurers, including UnitedHealthcare, Aetna, Medical Mutual, Dean Healthcare and others, offer tablet-splitting programs that allow their participants to significantly cut their co-pay costs on their medication. Conversely, some healthcare payers delay or even deny payment for lower strengths of certain medications; this often requires that pharmacies and other healthcare facilities split tablets in order to fulfill prescriptions.

"Many healthcare facilities are stocking only higher strength medications so they can save costs on formulary inventory and conserve space, resulting in significant cost savings," said TCG CEO Duane Chudy. "Splitting pills can potentially save healthcare plans, long-term care facilities and hospitals hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. But cost savings must not come at the sacrifice of patient safety, which means ensuring that each patient is receiving the accurate and appropriate dosage of a medication. We identified an urgent need for an accurate tablet-splitter to ensure patient safety."

Studies of cost-savings associated with tablet splitting date back to 2002 when Stanford University researchers found that splitting pills from 11 medications commonly used in its health plan provided savings ranging from 23 percent to 50 percent. Researchers projected an annual savings of \$295,500 to the healthcare plan if fully implemented.

A 2007 study from the University of Michigan (UM) looked at the impact of splitting cholesterol-lowering drugs in the UM Health system. In its first full year, the program saved UM \$195,000 and saved more than 500 plan participants more than \$25,000 in co-payments.

“People ask us to split pills for them and we do our best, but the old-fashioned pill splitters can cause crumbling,” said Darden Heritage, president of Star Discount Pharmacy in Huntsville, Ala., and a 20-year pharmacy veteran. “They split pills, but not accurately, so you’re actually wasting time and money.”

A recent study at the Veterans Administration Center in Asheville, N.C., found that when patients split their own medication the variability ranged between nine and 37 percent. TCG found similar results when an independent trained pharmacy technician split 250 metoprolol tablets using the BullsEye Tablet Splitter and 250 metoprolol tablets using the Apex Pill Splitter, a standard hand-operated product. Each half was measured with a caliper (0.01mm accuracy) and the 1000 data points were analyzed for variability. The variability of the BullsEye Tablet Splitter was two percent compared to 11 percent variability with the manual splitter.

“BullsEye splits pills five times more accurately than manual splitters,” Matt Noffsinger, VP of Business Development, stated. “Although we have split and tested other medications, our latest test was performed on metoprolol because it is one of the most commonly split medications. The device is designed to handle a wide range of pill sizes and types, making it suitable for all pharmacy markets.”

About TCGRx

TCGRx (TCG) is an industry leader in automation and design services for hospital, long-term care, retail, and specialty pharmacy markets. Its offering of products is designed to allow for customized solutions depending on the individual pharmacy’s need. TCG’s solutions are modular, expandable and flexible, which allows a pharmacy to invest in technology in line with its rate of growth. TCG has made efficiency and patient safety the hallmarks of their development strategy.

TCG has a strong presence in all pharmacy markets in North and South America. TCG offers a full line of inventory control software and pharmacy fixtures, automation and design services backed by installation and customer support teams. TCG headquarters is located in Powers Lake, Wis. For more information, visit www.tcgrx.com.