

# Skilled Care Pharmacy

**PRIVATE  
BUSINESS AWARDS  
Winner**  
25-74 Years  
in business



Whether it is a pharmacist consulting with doctors and nurses at a facility or a driver delivering a much-needed medication, Larry Galluzzo knows his staff is dedicated to improving the lives of the elderly.

"What we are trying to do is increase the quality of life of residents in their own homes and in nursing homes," said Galluzzo, founder and president of Skilled Care Pharmacy.

Galluzzo, a consultant pharmacist, founded Skilled Care in 1981 with a single office, a single employee and three skilled nursing facilities as customers. He wanted to do what's best for the senior population in the area of medication management.

That germ of an idea is now the culture at Skilled Care, where continual improvement and "doing the right thing" drives most decisions. It is expressed in terms of lowering costs and reducing unnecessary medications in the frail elderly.

Senior managers keep tabs on the business at weekly huddles every Thursday at 11 a.m.

Organizational activity is driven by Malcolm Baldrige Award quality criteria, said Nancy Mlinarik, owner and vice president. Every three years strategic initiatives are set and are constantly updated. Goals for directors, managers and employees are aligned with the overall strategic plan and specific outcomes for productivity and quality.

"We drive it down the organizational chart," Mlinarik said.

Recent improvements in employee communication – thanks to several business books Galluzzo and the executive team are reading – are pushing performance even higher.

"I am walking the four corners and speaking to the people who do the work every day," Galluzzo said. "It gives us a better insight and we communicate better with the people who are doing the work."

Getting top executives into the trenches is important for a company operating on so many different levels. Skilled Care provides a range of pharmacy services including medication dispensing and delivery, consultant pharmacist oversight, medical records production for client facilities, billing services, and nursing education opportunities.

Galluzzo starting writing a monthly CEO letter to reinforce the company's vision and goals to all 250 employees.

"Employees love to feel engaged and see the owners present in the organization," Mlinarik said.

To foster an environment of organizational innovation, agility, and learning, managers follow seven principles to guide them through daily decisions.

- The seven principles are:
- People: Organizational success begins and ends with people working together.
  - Purpose: Our purpose is to satisfy our customers.
  - Customer: Customers are satisfied by using our products and services.
  - Measurement: Customer satisfaction is measurable.
  - Process: Processes generate products and services that satisfy customers.
  - Improvement: Improving processes occurs through the Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle.
  - Persistence: Persistence in applying the prin-

cles is the key to success.

Mlinarik and Galluzzo said they believe Skilled Care's mission to improve lives, paired with the company's culture of open communication is what leads to its low employee turnover. On Sept. 1, the firm will celebrate it's first employee's 30-year anniversary.

Skilled Care's long history is marked by innovation.

There are little touches, like Galluzzo's choice to decorate corporate offices with art created by residents at the facilities Skilled Care serves. Visit the Mason headquarters and you'll see pen and ink drawings, paintings, needlework, quilts and afghans.

"One thing we lose sight of is that the elderly living in these institutions are still very creative and very intelligent people and you can really appreciate what they've done over the years," Galluzzo said.

And then there are entirely new community outreach programs.

A new division called Skilled Care Direct extends the company's reach. It is designed to reduce hospital readmissions for patients discharged from the hospital into extended care units or their own homes.

"It's alarming the number of times we see medications not taken or not refilled," Mlinarik said. "And the more chronic the condition, the higher the incidence. This is a generation that should be living like kings and queens."

At discharge, a consultant pharmacist is paired with a patient and will contact them by phone to check in. Specially designed "compliance packaging" makes it easier for patients to remember to take all of their medications.

"Multidose packages help make it easy to take the medications and extend life," Galluzzo said.

Skilled Care also is working to develop remote



Larry Galluzzo, Skilled Care Pharmacy

systems that put a drug dispensing machine into facilities.

And despite being in an industry with shrinking margins, Skilled Care is not cutting offerings that mean a hit to its bottom line, like continuing education credits for nurses and in-person customer service calls. Mlinarik said 90 percent of decisions the firm makes are not about the bottom line. That operating philosophy has made Skilled Care one of the leading providers of pharmacy services for long term care facilities, serving more than 10,000 patients in more than 100 facilities.

"It's our competitive advantage," Galluzzo said. "We like to do what we think is the right thing to do."

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