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“Put your patients first.”

CHARTWELL PENNSYLVANIA, LP PRESIDENT KATHLEEN PATRICK KNOWS HOW TO MAKE PATIENTS FEEL AT HOME.

WORDS JENNIFER SIJNJA • IMAGES UNIQUE PHOTO PRO

Since 1991, Chartwell Pennsylvania, LP (Chartwell) has been developing a smooth transition for patients from the hospital back to their homes. A home infusion and specialty pharmacy that falls under the umbrella of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), Chartwell is overseen by President Kathleen Patrick, who has been involved with the healthcare industry for 35 years, with UPMC for 20, and as president of Chartwell for the past four.

When Kathleen took on the responsibility of Chartwell, she says it was “a single location operation that was highly successful and had excellent cash flow, but was focused on only one business line: home infusion”. Thus, one of the first challenges she faced was transforming the company into an organization with multiple locations and services, and enacting a culture shift to ensure a solid focus on growth and synergy.

Kathleen was also confronted with a collaborative challenge. Traditionally, Chartwell had functioned on the periphery of the UPMC Health System, but she says the need arose to transform its post-acute home infusion pharmacy model to better support the health system’s discharge processes. In the past, the transition would take place as a complicated hand-off, but the team was determined to create a more seamless transition for the patient, viewing patient care in its entirety, rather than from a more traditional perspective.

Benefits extend to Chartwell from its relationship with UPMC, with the latter’s organic growth contributing to Chartwell’s own progress. “As UPMC continues to grow and expand from a hospital-acquisition perspective,” Kathleen notes, “we will follow along, growing and expanding with it”. In 2018, UPMC acquired the Pinnacle healthcare system, in the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania area, comprising nine hospitals. The plan for »



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Chartwell is to build a local facility to support this cluster of hospitals after already expanding to Erie, Pennsylvania; Altoona, Pennsylvania; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

With the launch of its specialty pharmacy in 2010, Chartwell is also committed to offering its patients the latest in medical breakthroughs. There are new drugs that cure hepatitis C, and others that offer patients in the neurology space much hope. Kathleen makes special mention of Radicava, the first drug on the market with the capacity to shorten the progression of ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), or Lou Gehrig’s disease. “We are on the forefront with every one of these drugs, and are focused on bringing them to market in our area,” she says.

It is the clinical aspect of Chartwell’s partnership with the larger UPMC system that Kathleen identifies as the most important. This stems from the notion that the patient always comes first, and from an intention to manage clinical practice in the same way it is managed in the hospital system. “This involves coordinating the efforts from a pharmacy oversight committee, understanding what happens with the patient in the hospital, and what the expectations are in the home,” Kathleen explains. “Many of our patients are oncology patients, dealing with an acute event in their cancer progression, so we work with their physicians to be able to keep everyone informed, and identify certain risks or behaviors – such as side effects of the medication – to keep patients as stable in the home as possible.”

Chartwell aims to provide its patients with as

much independence as possible. “We know that if you’re in control of your life, you feel much better about it,” Kathleen notes. This aim has a close relationship with a piece of advice that she has taken to heart: “Put the patient first, and everything else will follow.” This clear focus is a vital element of the healthy corporate culture at Chartwell, and Kathleen knows that “if, as employees, we do everything right in terms of patient care and quality – with those patients having put their lives in our hands, trusting us to be able to help them – everything else will fall into place.” ■