

Second, it will serve to cut the cost of operation of the hospital pharmacy.

Third, it will serve to aid prescribing physicians to write therapeutically more rational prescriptions.

Fourth, it will serve to cut the cost of medications to the patient and in the final analysis, this is one of the most important benefits realized both from the standpoint of the physician and the hospital, because in both cases the first and last consideration is their guest, the patient.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF AN OPEN-ALL-NIGHT POLICY IN A RETAIL PHARMACY.*

BY HERMAN AND ROBERT ELICH.

In 1910 there were few pharmacies in Chicago that were open all night. At that time the Northwestern Pharmacy had been operating for ten years and had established a reputation for carrying an unusually large prescription stock. The owners decided that an open-all-night policy might be profitable and plans were made accordingly. The store had good transportation facilities, being located on one of six corners where three street car lines cross. There was also a transfer station of two elevated electric lines across the street.

The first difficulty encountered was to find a pharmacist who would work only at night. He would necessarily have to agree to work seven nights of the week, as it would be difficult to engage another pharmacist to relieve him on any night. After some time a reliable man was found who would work these hours, and he was employed to work during the day for a few weeks to get acquainted with the stock.

At this time advertising of the open-all-night policy was begun. Letters were sent out to doctors and handbills were distributed throughout the neighborhood. Large *Open-All-Night* signs were erected on the store building where they could be seen from the street and also from the elevated trains which ran just behind the building. Posters were placed on the elevated train platforms, in the trains themselves and in the street cars.

After a few months it was found that many people did not understand the true meaning of "open-all-night." They thought that most pharmacies were open all night because at any time the pharmacist could be summoned by ringing a night bell. This necessitated adding "We never lock our door" to the signs. The daily papers also helped to remedy this misunderstanding by writing up the "open-all-night" policy as a news item.

The returns from the first year of operation resulted in a loss in the night business. The next few years were better but the profit was very small. It was not until the fourth year that any real profit resulted. By this time the store was beginning to be better known by people both in and out of the neighborhood, and when medicine was suddenly needed at night, they remembered the "open-all-night" store and came with their prescriptions. Besides this, a new group of customers composed of night watchmen, entertainers and others whose occupations kept them up late, began to patronize the store and became regular customers that were never seen by anyone during the day.

Extra expenses, due to remaining open all night, comprise wages for one

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registered pharmacist and a slight increase in lighting expense. Normally the store would be open until at least midnight and therefore, the lights burn only an additional five or six hours. It has been found that after one or two o'clock it is not necessary to keep on all lights and signs illuminated, and the pharmacist in charge turns off all but the necessary ones. Heat and rent expenses are not increased, as both of these go on night and day.

The maintenance of a night business in a pharmacy has several other effects on the general business during the day. It acquaints new people with the store. A customer may come at night for the first time due to an emergency. However, after that he may become a regular day customer for both refill and new prescriptions and for merchandise. This requires maintaining a large stock of all prescription items so that on his initial trip, the customer will not be disappointed.

The "open-all-night" slogan is also a good advertising feature and makes the people remember the store. It is a worth-while service to detail to the medical profession. It makes it possible to approach doctors outside of the immediate neighborhood and often service rendered at night, such as supplying some serum, ampul or other medicament makes a lasting friend of the doctor, and encourages future patronage. One pharmacist goes out each week to call on physicians and tells them about the open-all-night service, backed by a full line of prescription goods, biologicals and ampuls.

The employment of a pharmacist all night makes possible the preparation of a great many more pharmaceutical items than could ordinarily be made. The pharmacist is alone and unhampered, and on few nights is he kept constantly busy waiting on trade. This allows for the manufacture of many preparations requiring long filtration or processing that would be inconvenient to prepare during the busier hours of the day. Solution of Magnesium Citrate and various tinctures and elixirs can readily be made. He also is of assistance in checking, arranging and cleaning merchandise.

One of the most troublesome things to contend with is thievery and especially that of a petty nature. The man on night duty always stays in the store and does not go to the basement unless absolutely necessary. However, in a large store it is impossible to watch everything and occasionally things disappear. The policemen know that the pharmacist is alone and drop in from time to time during the night to see that all is well. The location of the store is an aid in this connection.

During the influenza epidemic of 1917, the degree to which the store had become known was apparent. It was necessary to employ extra men at night and these could hardly keep up with the business. At another time a man chartered a plane in South Haven, Michigan, flew to Chicago, took a taxi from the airport to the store, had two prescriptions filled and then returned in the same manner. This incident occurred because the necessary heart medicine was unobtainable in the Michigan town, and the Chicago physician vacationing there remembered that the Northwestern Pharmacy was open all night.

The store maintains a free delivery service to all parts of the city by day, but it has been found impossible to continue this during the night. Nevertheless, many emergency prescriptions delivered by a doctor during the night or telephone calls for supplies are accompanied with the request that they be immediately de-

livered by taxi. The fact that there is a greater number of automobile owners to-day, as compared to the few who owned cars when the open-all-night policy was started, is an important factor in the continued success of the night business.

The amount of business done at night can be seen from the following percentages. These figures do not include sales at the fountain. The fountain is under separate management and closes at one o'clock in the morning.

	Per Cent of Sales.
24-hour period	100.0
Day—8:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M.	83.9
Night—11:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M.	16.1

The total daily prescription business comprises 16.9 per cent of the total sales. The prescription business is divided as follows:

	Per Cent of Prescription Sales.
Day, new prescriptions	66.3
Day, refill prescriptions	20.4
	—
Day, total prescriptions	86.7
Night, new prescriptions	11.5
Night, refill prescriptions	1.8
	—
Night, total prescriptions	13.3
	—
Total, 24 hours	100.0

These percentages show that the majority of the night prescriptions are of an emergency nature, because the refill prescriptions make up one-third of the day prescription business and less than one-sixth of the sales at night.

The essential thing in continuing to make the night business thrive is to advertise. All labels, stationery, signs, pamphlets and every prescription that leaves the store must bear on it "open-all-night." Doctors must be detailed and encouraged to avail themselves of this service. This must be done so that when a night emergency arises, the patient and the doctor will remember that there is an open-all-night pharmacy ready to supply their needs.

PHARMACY IN PRISON.*

BY CHARLES L. PICKENS.¹

I understand that I am the first pharmacist from the Federal Penal System to be honored by an invitation to present a paper before this ASSOCIATION. This has its disadvantages as well as its advantages. True enough I have no standard to try to reach, neither do I have an established precedent to guide me along the way. If Government regulations permitted my telling you a lot of inside stories of many of the country's most notorious criminals whom I have known and worked with during the last ten and a half years, I could hold your attention whether you were any wiser when I finished or not, but regulations prevent, so that is out of the picture.

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