

An unprecedented year in healthcare

As the collection of case studies were compiled for this 2020-2021 GS1 Healthcare Reference Book, the global healthcare industry was battling the COVID-19 virus.

While social-distancing measures have helped to “flatten the curve,” the presence and impact of the coronavirus will continue to be felt for many months, and even years. The citizens of the world have never before depended as much on our healthcare systems as now.

Researchers are collaborating on vaccine developments and new treatments, healthcare suppliers are working overtime to provide urgently needed pharmaceuticals and medical devices, and healthcare providers are on the frontlines—millions of “healthcare heroes” caring for patients and saving lives.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is challenging the digital foundation of our global supply chain and national care systems, investments in GS1 standards by healthcare suppliers and providers have strengthened this foundation.



Hospitals are operating more efficiently and delivering enhanced patient-centric care.

Throughout this book, read how hospitals are using GS1 standards to provide better and safer patient care. Part of England’s National Health Service, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust is providing timely and efficient patient care, since medical equipment, beds and other assets are proactively maintained and readily available.

With GS1 standards, the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System in the US is using supplier-provided product data to analyse the cost of patient procedures and the effectiveness of outcomes. GS1 Netherlands and other GS1 Member Organisations



Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is providing concerned relatives with real-time information for their patients’ progress.

are working with a healthcare consulting organisation to develop patient safety outcome measurements for evaluating and improving the implementation of GS1 standards in hospitals.

Vast improvements in stock management are helping to ensure that inventory is available, when needed.

With its progress in stock management, Ireland’s Tallaght University Hospital is giving clinical staff more time to spend with patients. Out-of-stock situations are now virtually non-existent at the Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory in Denmark and the Radboud University Medical Centre in the Netherlands.

In Chinese Taipei, St. Joseph’s Hospital is reducing the time for processing an order by 50%.

At the Lovisenberg Diaconal Hospital in Norway, manual orders that once took up to two hours every day now take only minutes with automation supported by GS1 standards. The hospital has full visibility of its many pieces of surgical equipment for safer operations. In Hungary, the Markhot Ferenc Teaching Hospital is using GS1 standards to successfully measure its use of pharmaceuticals and medical devices for lower costs, yet highly effective patient care.

Progress continues in implementing GS1 standards for the traceability of medical devices, surgical equipment and pharmaceuticals.

Japan’s National Center for Global Health and Medicine has successfully identified medical devices with GS1 standards and integrated this

information across its hospital systems. As a result, 30% less time is now required to record medical devices used in surgery.



Suppliers are meeting traceability regulatory requirements and streamlining their delivery of products.

At Aché Laboratories in Brazil, 180 million or 100% of the company’s secondary and tertiary packages are labelled with GS1 standards. Colombia’s Alexion has successfully completed a pilot of its traceability system that enables visibility of pharmaceuticals throughout the supply chain.

Bionorica in Germany completed its implementation of pharmaceutical serialisation ahead of Russia’s scheduled regulation deadline. In Jordan, Hikma Pharmaceuticals has successfully implemented a traceability system for its complete line of pharmaceuticals—one that can easily scale across its three global regions in response to emerging regulations.

Johnson & Johnson shares its perspectives and universal support of Unique Device Identification regulations, allowing healthcare providers to use UDI data in their procurement systems, inventory management systems, electronic health record systems and implant registries, while upholding the highest standards of patient privacy, quality and compliance.

During this time of uncertainty, we can depend on GS1 standards and each other.

While this time is unprecedented, it’s also filled with many opportunities. For more than 15 years, we have worked together, as



AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson Pharmaceutical conducted assessments of their suppliers’ barcodes, showing a remarkable year-over-year gain of 52 percentage points in the presence of GS1 barcodes to meet the serialisation requirements of the US Food and Drug Administration’s Drug Supply Chain Security Act.

GS1 Healthcare, to digitally transform our healthcare supply chain and solve some of its greatest challenges. Together, we will continue to leverage standards, technology and our innovative spirit to accelerate this transformation, helping to put the world back on a healthy track.