



Title: **PHSI and Dakota Country invest in area health care**
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Thanks to a federal program designed to assist hospitals and pharmacies with prescription drug costs, Philip Health Services, Inc. and Dakota Country Pharmacy have established a partnership intended to strengthen the local health care system.

The 340B drug program lets hospitals buy prescription medications from manufacturers at a significant discount. To qualify for the program, hospitals must meet eligibility requirements, such as nonprofit status, serving a rural population, or receiving federal grants. Hospitals then use the resulting savings to improve health care access and services in their local communities.

Since PHSI does not have an in-house pharmacy, Dakota Country Pharmacy serves as its pharmacy partner in the 340B program. When PHSI patients have their prescriptions filled at Dakota Country Pharmacy, the program credits a portion of the drug cost to PHSI. However, the program

does not apply if both business entities are not involved (for example, if a PHSI patient has prescriptions filled at a different pharmacy). This partnership between the two local health care leaders produces a modest reimbursement fund that PHSI will invest in improvements to the local health care system.

In addition to the funding provided, the program strengthens and enhances the long-term viability of two health care entities in the community by providing benefits only when both entities work together. "PHSI is very interested in Dakota Country Pharmacy being a vibrant member of the local medical community. We need a local pharmacy to ensure the long-term success of PHSI," said Kent Olson, PHSI administrator. Courtney Kjerstad, Pharm.D. and owner of Dakota Country Pharmacy, agreed. "I feel very fortunate for the opportunity to serve a rural community that is able to provide excellent health care."

PHSI and Dakota Country Pharmacy began their joint participation in the program in 2014, and will begin receiving discount reimbursement funds in 2015. "We are only able to extend this benefit into the community when patients utilize both PHSI and Dakota Country Pharmacy," said Olson. "The more both facilities are utilized, the larger the benefit of the program, thus strengthening health care delivery in Philip and the surrounding area."

"The 340B program is coming at a very fortuitous time," Olson continued. "In 2014, PHSI completed its first comprehensive community health needs assessment, which uncovered a number of opportunities to improve health care services, improve access to these services, and develop new services."

The community health needs assessment document is available to the public at the PHSI business office or online at www.philiphealthservices.com.

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*Courtesy Photo*

Courtney Kjerstad, left, owner of Dakota Country Pharmacy in Philip and Kent Olson, administrator at PhilipHealth Service, Inc., shake on the agreement that will strengthen local health care.