

ATMs for Rx Refills

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Machines dispensing prescription drugs are popping up around the country. The automated kiosks are designed to shorten lines at pharmacist counters.

San Diego-based Asteres has been testing its ScriptCenter refill machines in Longs Drug Stores on the West Coast, and will soon put them in Giant Stores on the East Coast. Pharmacists stock the machines with refills; customers get access with a pass code and credit card.

Mendota Healthcare of Eden Prairie, Minn., is taking a different tack. It's placing InstyMeds machines in the rural Midwest that dispense acute medicines like antibiotics in ERs, clinics and pediatricians' offices. Doctors see patients and then electronically send prescriptions to the machines, so patients can pick up their drugs on the way out. CEO Brad Schraut's in-spiration for innovation? His toddler's late-night ear infections.

—L.S.

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