

# County pharmacy unique

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One of the last places most people would look for a pharmacy is in the basement of the Woodbury County Courthouse.

But pharmacist Don Bushar said there has been a pharmacy at that location for more than seven years.

Bushar is the operator of the Woodbury County Pharmacy, housed on the north side of the courthouse basement just off the cafeteria. Bushar said the pharmacy has been at that location since 1976. Prior to that time the pharmacy was housed across the street in another county building.

The Woodbury County Pharmacy is a rare specimen. Bushar said he knows of no other county pharmacies in Iowa, and only two nationwide. It began in the mid-1930s and was originally set up as part of a county doctor-nurse operation.

"As time progressed, most of the other parts (of the county's medical operation) were phased out," Bushar said. "It was always felt retaining the pharmacy was a good idea."

The pharmacy is not a typical retail outlet. The "common" citizen, in fact, cannot use the service. Bushar's pharmacy caters to those in need of prescription drugs and supplies, subject to eligibility requirements. His primary customers are prisoners in the county jail, juveniles in detention, veterans and their families, mental health patients and social services clients.

They all have one trait in common — they must have a prescription before any pharmaceutical supplies are issued.

"Everything I issue needs to be authorized through a prescription just like you would need to get drugs at any retail pharmacy," Bushar said. The 30-year veteran of pharmaceutical medicine said he does not issue more than a 30-day supply of any medication at any one time.

In addition to the hours spent in the pharmacy outlet, Bushar also takes care of the prescription drug needs at the county care facility and two group homes. The county's pharmaceutical service does not cover Title 19 or 20 cases.

The pharmacy service is sponsored by Woodbury County taxpayers, but in the long run, tax dollars are saved by the county having its own pharmacy, according to Bushar. He said this



Don Bushar operates the Woodbury County Pharmacy, housed in the basement of the Woodbury County Courthouse. (Staff photo by Mark Reinders)

method allows for better control of the drugs and avoids waste, along with saving the expense of running to a retail pharmacy when supplies are needed by a county patient. Beyond that, Bushar said he can fill a prescription for about half what it would cost at a retail outlet.

Each of the county departments which use the pharmacy service, such as the sheriff's department, are in charge of budgeting for the expenditure. Bushar bills each

department using pharmaceutical services.

Bushar said he keeps very few drugs on hand of interest to enterprising "street-dealers," but even so, the business is safely housed in the former site of the courthouse vault and is locked securely at night.

Bushar also noted one major difference between the county facility and major retail stores in the Siouxland area. He doesn't deliver.