

# Medical Park Pharmacy



## An Independent Home Town Pharmacy for Over 35 Years

When a professional peer approached Kevin Regier with a business proposition back in the late 1990s, he was faced with a decision - staying the course or taking the leap. And even though he had no complaints about the course he was on, Regier chose the leap.

The result of that conversation with Rich Bieber about 15 years ago is Regier's sole ownership of Medical Park Pharmacy, 1309 Polk; it is inside the Central Kansas Medical Park building. Bieber had owned the business since the late 1970s and Regier bought it from him in January 2000.

"Rich approached me with this opportunity," Regier recalled. "I hadn't thought about something like this. But Rich asked me about it when I was at that certain age. I was thinking 'if I don't do something now, I never will.'"

He was in his mid-30s at the time and now is 52. Regier had been a Dillons pharmacist for 9-and-a-half years at the time. "This was just a different opportunity out of the blue; I was not looking for it at all," he said.

Staci Snider and Renee Zink, both part-time pharmacists at Medical Park, help Regier with the day-to-day operations. Five other employees back them up; two are pharmacy technicians and a third soon will have that title. When Regier bought the business, he was the only pharmacist, with four other employees. "I was getting to the age that I needed some time off here and there," Regier laughed. "I have to see a doctor myself once in a while."

"I rely heavily on everyone here," he added. "We use their talents to the fullest. They are the ones who help keep things rolling."

As employees of one of the few independent pharmacies in the area, the staff strives to provide a high level of service and offer more one-on-one time with customers whenever possible. "Customers can talk to me or the other pharmacists privately if they need to," Regier continued, noting it is important to have a good, open relationship with a pharmacist.



"They can feel free to talk to us about certain things; they shouldn't feel impeded from asking us questions."

Consultations with the pharmacist can be time consuming but Regier said they are sometimes important because of the valuable information shared. Topics include drug interactions, medical history, and proper storage and use of medicines.

This kind of teamwork is often taken to the next level. "For instance, a doctor might order a prescription to be taken every eight hours," Regier commented. "But not everyone lives on an eight-hour cycle. They might have to get out of bed at night to take a pill."

"So, we work with the doctor and can sometimes find a more convenient schedule," he noted. "This is an example of the teamwork approach that is becoming more common in health care. We work with doctors and nurses to make adjustments when necessary."

Regier, a native of Buhler, went to Bethel College for a couple of years and graduated from Wichita State University in 1987 with a degree in general studies. Then it was off to the University of Kansas School Of Pharmacy.

(It is not difficult to tell that Regier is a Jayhawk; his store is rock-chalk full of KU memorabilia.)

"I knew I wanted the general field of health care," he said. "It just took me a few years to figure it out."

Some graduating pharmacists tell Regier they want to go out on their own like he did. And while he obviously understands, he also hopes they consider getting some day-to-day pharmacy experience before jumping into business ownership.

In addition to full-time pharmacy duties, owners must also handle administration and management. "You are responsible for everything when you are the owner, and there are always changes in regulations and procedures. The entire health-care field is becoming more demanding, and state and federal regulations are always changing."

Medical Park's hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. After-hours help is available in case of an emergency; free delivery service is designed for those with mobility problems; and the business tries to stay price competitive.

Regier and his wife, Cindy, have two children - Jacob is in Great Bend and Emilie is at KU.

"Cindy is from Medicine Lodge and we wanted a place close to our families," Regier said. "We came to Great Bend to start but never thought we would become long-time residents. Part of the reason we enjoy it here is the support of our customers who stayed with us through the change in ownership." —

