

When additional medications are ordered, a copy of the MAR is made and forwarded to the pharmacy. The pharmacist will then determine the completeness and appropriateness of the order. If it passes inspection by the pharmacist, the medication will be sent to the nurse for administration.

Drug products may be stored for use in several places. Commonly used large volume intravenous solutions, which do not require additional drugs be added to them, are usually stored at the nursing station medication room. These medications are generally known as *floor stock*. Depending on the area and medical specialty involved, other medications may also be stored in this way. When dealing with floor stock, one thing must always be remembered. *It is the pharmacy that is responsible to see that the medications are stored and used properly, and it is the pharmacy that decides what medications will be stored there.*



A typical Crash Cart
Healthcare Logistics, Inc

Medications which are commonly used during life threatening emergencies need to be available to the practitioner without delay. These medications are kept close at hand on each nursing area in containers known as *crash carts* or *emergency trays*. As with floor stock, these medications are the responsibility of the pharmacy. This group of medications bring up an interesting point on the MAR and pharmacy review. There are times when a dose of medication will be given before the pharmacist can review the order. An emergency drug is a perfect example of this. In this situation, the pharmacist will receive the MAR with the notation of administration already present, and the pharmacist will conduct a *retrospective review* (meaning after the fact) of the medication use. While retrospectively reviewing a medication use won't do any good for this patient, the findings can help future patients. Any incorrect usage of the medicine can be covered with the practitioner, and future patients will benefit.

Intravenous products into which the practitioner wants additional medication added are handled by the IV Admixture area of the pharmacy. These workers are skilled in the specialty area of IV fluids, their use, and their compatibilities. Work performed in this area must adhere to strict sterility standards which we will discuss in a future chapter. MARs that have orders for these products will be routed here. The scheduled times for administration are taken into account, and the product is prepared for delivery to the nursing unit close to the time at which it is needed.



Medications which are to be given on a repeated basis, and are available in a unit dose package, will be handled through the inpatient pharmacy via the cart exchange process. In this process, medications which a patient will use for a specific time period (usually 24 hours) will be placed in a bin marked with their name and location. This bin is then placed within a cart that holds bins for all of the patients on that nursing area. Each day at the appointed time, this cart is then switched with the cart from the previous day, giving another complete day's supply of medication for the patient.