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Pharmacies may be ubiquitous in L.A., but Beverly Hills Medical Plaza Pharmacy stands out by providing personalized service.

"Our patients are like family," says owner Rohini Goldstein. "They know us by name. We know them, know what their needs are. We take care of them."

That individual service has resulted in loyal customers. Some have been coming since the pharmacy opened 20 years ago. Some continue to use the pharmacy even after moving out of the area.

"We ship anywhere in the U.S.," explains Russell Ybarra, the pharmacy's patient advocate. "Pretty much wherever you are, we can ship it. If you go on vacation, we'll ship it there."

For local customers who can't make it to the pharmacy at 150 N. Robertson Blvd. in Beverly Hills (just north of Wilshire), the pharmacy does home deliveries.

"We drop off a lot of prescriptions on our way home from work," says Goldstein. "But if someone needs it in the middle of the day, I'll take it to them."

When they say local deliveries, that doesn't just mean West Hollywood and Beverly Hills. They do home deliveries to Silver Lake and the Valley as well. And because they have so many customers who now live in Palm Springs, Ybarra makes monthly trips to the Coachella Valley.

"We've set our Palm Springs cus-

tomers up to refill at the same time and I go out once a month to make deliveries," says Ybarra.

This dedication to personal service is the result of experience. In the late 1980s, Goldstein, a nurse, battled breast cancer and had difficulties paying for her medicines. During her treatments, she met lots of HIV patients. So, when she recovered, she felt the need to help others and decided to open the pharmacy.

About half of the customers are gay or transgender. Part of that is a result of Pacific Oaks Medical Group, a predominantly gay practice, being located on the third floor of the building. The other reason is because they have developed such a good reputation in the gay community and make a point of giving back.

While many think that independent pharmacies have higher prices than chains, that's not correct.

"Regardless of what pharmacy you go to, if you have insurance, your co-pay is going to be the same," says Ybarra. "So instead of the big chains, why not support the independent pharmacies?"

For people without insurance, they'll work with them on price.

Beyond prescriptions, the pharmacy also carries vitamins, soaps, fragrances, toys, stuffed dolls, cards and other gift items. Beverly Hills Medical Plaza Pharmacy is open Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

pharmacybeverlyhills.com