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Project of the Month: Levi + Wong and Cutler complete D'Youville Life and Wellness Community's Center for Advanced Therapy

March 15, 2012 - Construction Design & Engineering

The D'Youville Life and Wellness Community's Center for Advanced Therapy celebrated its grand opening on February 29, with over 350 people braving a late winter snowstorm to attend. It was Levi + Wong Design Associates and Cutler Associates pleasure to be a part of the celebration and to have played a part in the D'Youville success story. This distinctive building houses both the D'Youville Center for Advanced Therapy, providing a new home for D'Youville's short-term transitional rehabilitation and hospice care services, and the New England Rehabilitation Hospital Satellite at Lowell, providing acute rehabilitation services. This combination ensures the center's distinguished place on the continuum of healthcare.

Levi + Wong Design Assoc. served as architects, landscape architects, interior designers, and planners, and Cutler Assoc. served as the construction manager for the new building on the campus.

The new, unique, state-of-the-art rehabilitative therapy environment is distinctively spacious and has been designed with open and expansive spaces for increased patient access, mobility, and reduction of physical barriers. Using patient-centered care design, and evidenced-based design models, the center is organized to facilitate patient recovery, caregiver assistance, and family involvement while highlighting contemporary, rehabilitative, and hospitality design aesthetics and amenities.

The center's footprint was planned to meet D'Youville's desire for a hillside entry and a visible nighttime western campus. The building's hillside entrance is village-style with a residential scale, a chapel's anchoring stonewall, a colonnade entrance facade, and a bridge terrace overlook. The shell consists of simple forms like bay windows, resin panels, grey metal roofing, and retaining walls of regional stonework. Facing the street, the physical therapy areas floor-to-ceiling windows are oriented to allow natural light to reduce environmental impacts during the day, and create an attractive, welcoming street view.

The interior was developed around the light-filled entrance atrium, nursing, and activity area from which the patient wings rotate. Interior circulation to the D'Youville Center for Advanced Therapy and New England Rehabilitation Hospital at Lowell, located on separate floors, is centralized through the entrance atrium with a distinguished connecting stair. The programming and planning required a functional crucifix floor plan, which was coincidental to the campus's religious connections.

The center's plan allows for easy circulation and belies its rehabilitative function, while maintaining patient privacy and dignity. The 9'-6" corridors with resting areas, even lighting, and open plan multipurpose, dining, and family areas conceal, yet fully accommodate, the center's clinical purpose

and contribute to a soothing spa-like atmosphere. The multipurpose rehabilitation gym houses state-of-the-art equipment that would be found in any new fitness center. Three outdoor rehabilitation courtyards are strategically placed for easy access and activities of daily living therapeutic use.

The spacious patient rooms large windows, built-in storage, refined color palette, and large bathrooms enhance the non-clinical appearance. As dictated by their purpose, the bariatric suites have patient lifts for direct access to toilets and bathing, and the four-room private hospice suite ensures situational respectfulness, and each has a private courtyard.

Currently registered with the USGBC, the center has been designed to be LEED 2009 New Construction Silver certifiable and is one of the first LEED Silver certifiable healthcare buildings in Massachusetts. The project team strived to optimize energy performance in the building's envelope, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems. A water source variable flow refrigerant (VFR) heat pump system was selected based on first-cost and lifecycle cost. Electrical rebates through the utility company's lighting program were obtained.

The project team worked intensively and collaboratively during preconstruction to make the project feasible to balance the program, budget, schedule, and design. Through the use of Cutler's pre construction services and estimating process, the team examined options and alternates to perform an assertive value engineering and systems analysis. As a result of these efforts, a \$1.2 million budget reduction was achieved by Levi + Wong and Cutler, which aligned with D'Youville's target.

Patients will begin to use the center by the end of March and will enjoy the facility for a long time to come. Plans are in the works already for the Affordable Assisted Living Residence at D'Youville, located across the street from the center, anticipated to be completed in 2015.