



nerej

Keeping up with medical advances and challenges

April 16, 2015 - Construction Design & Engineering

The advances in medicine over the course of the past decade have truly been astounding. The domino effect of these advances go way beyond prolonging the lives of patients. It also raises the bar for the facilities that treat these patients to meet the needs for people receiving these treatments, as well as a growing elder population.

As a general contractor specializing in renovations and new construction, the challenge for healthcare, assisted living and skilled nursing facilities is twofold. In addition to the actual work, you have to be able to complete the project with minimal disruption to patients/residents and staff at the facility. When you consider the scope of work a particular project, that's much easier said than done. A recent renovation our firm undertook at Concord Healthcare Center in Concord, Mass., provides a sample of how these projects have to be thoughtfully coordinated and executed.

The Concord Health Care Center is a post acute care facility offering rehabilitation services. Additionally, they provide long-term care and a state-of-the-art memory care program for residents suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia.

The \$4.3 million renovation project involved reallocation of space, new designs to accommodate new programs and updated mechanical, electrical and plumbing. Here's the breakdown of the entire renovation:

- * Remodeling of all common areas on the second and third floors (included flooring paint, lighting, lineal wall covering)
- * Renovation of 25 resident rooms in the short-term rehabilitation wing
- * Lobby renovation that included an ADA compliant reception desk
- * Exterior Front entrance renovation

What makes a project like this more challenging is that it involves work with the front entrance and a lobby. For any building, these areas are critical both for people who work there and guests. When it's a post acute care facility, it takes on even greater importance as it's the first point of contact for loved ones going to visit a sick family member or friend or if you are bringing somebody in for treatment. So when a renovation of an entrance or reception desk occurs, you have to plan accordingly to minimize downtime.

For a project of this scope, we create a process that involves frequent communication with the appropriate staff, signage, and other ongoing efforts to minimize the impact to operations.

Now, for many contractors, the finished product is the ultimate litmus test for the success or failure of a job. For a general contractor working on a renovation at a healthcare facility like this one, the barometer is the finished product and whether or not the project makes a ripple on the day-to-day operations. When you have a project where both residents and staff say, "that went by quick" followed by "that looks fantastic", you know you have accomplished your mission.

Those were not the exact words used at the end of the renovation of the Concord Health Care

Center. The owners went one step further. Based on our firm's work, the owners hired us for renovation work at two of their other properties: Lexington Health Care Center in Lexington, Mass. and Essex Park in Beverly, Mass. And for a general contractor, that's the ultimate thank you: repeat business.

Tom Quinlan is the president and founder of South Coast Improvement, Marion, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540