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Construction workers convert Boston Convention & Exhibition Center into COVID-19 field hospital

April 13, 2020 - Front Section



The temporary hospital adds 1,000 beds as Massachusetts faces a significant shortfall due to COVID-19.

Boston, MA Union construction workers are answering the call for more hospital beds, converting the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center into a 1,000 bed field hospital in just three days. With the state's health care system facing a shortfall of thousands of beds, members from Sheet Metal Workers Local 17 worked around the clock to adapt the convention center's air system for the enormous temporary hospital.

Local 17 member Dan Morency adds filtration to the air circulation system to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Local 17 members working at J.C. Cannistraro had just days to complete the project before patients arrived. They jumped into action, adding filtration, modifying the rooftop ventilation units, and preparing isolation rooms to keep everyone safe.

“Sheet Metal Workers Local 17 went above and beyond what’s expected of them,” said Ray Martin, project manager at J.C. Cannistraro. “This isn’t part of their normal job. They did it for the people that are sick.”

Local 17 members completed the project in just 3 days, allowing patients to move in immediately.

“We’re proud to stand with our neighbors and communities during these tough times,” said Bob Butler, business manager of Local 17. “We will continue to help expand our healthcare capacity, so everyone can get the care they need.”

As the demand for hospital beds grows, Local 17, along with other building trades unions, is already planning additional field hospital construction throughout the region.

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