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Margulies Perruzzi designs two behavioral units for Southern Maine Health Care

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Shown (from left) are: Joanna Gratton, DO, medical director; Mary Jane Krebs, president, Spring Harbor Hospital; Nate Howell, president, Southern Maine Health Care; Diane Mankus, RN, senior director of behavioral health services; and Patsy Aprile, COO, Southern Maine Health Care.

Sanford, ME Margulies Perruzzi (MP), one of New England's most innovative architectural and interior design firms, has completed the expansion and repositioning of two behavioral healthcare units at the Sanford Medical Center (formerly the Goodall Hospital) for Southern Maine Health Care.

The grand opening took place on October 20th.

Southern Maine Health Care, in partnership with Maine Behavioral Healthcare, engaged Margulies Perruzzi and Array Architects to renovate a 24,000 s/f unit, creating 40 new beds across two floors, and to design a five-bed Emergency Department Acute Psychiatric (EDAP) unit. This project triples the number of short stay behavioral healthcare beds available in York County.

Partnering with Array Architects, a leader in healthcare planning and design, Margulies Perruzzi focused on incorporating as much access to daylight and nature as possible to leverage its clinical benefits. The team collaborated to situate activity rooms and common areas along the exterior walls of the building to bring in natural light and views of the Maine landscape for both patient and staff areas. Windows were maintained at patient areas while safety glass and borrowed light concepts were used to bring daylight deeper into the building. Art highlighting nature is incorporated at various seating areas throughout the unit to bring nature inside the building.

The new inpatient unit is secured with access through an interlocking sally port and features 20 double occupancy rooms, each with its own bathroom. To ensure the safety of patients, each room is designed to minimize ligature risk to provide both privacy and safety. Anti-ligature fixtures were used in the bathrooms and bedrooms as well as vandal proof ceilings. The design team used institutional materials with a residential look and feel to help reduce stress by providing a home-like feel for patients on the unit.

Each floor has a clinical support area with rooms designated for common dining, noisy activity, quiet activity, group therapy/multi-purpose, and private consultations with clinicians. The program accommodated a calming room on each floor that allows agitated patients a quiet area to self-calm through tactile work surface, reduced lighting levels, and reduction in both audio and visual distractions. This de-escalation space helps reduce the need for restraints or a seclusion room.

A centralized staff area provides a variety of open and closed work areas for staff. An open nurse station on the inpatient floors removes barriers between patients and staff. An enclosed private staff area can be used for charting, phone calls, and private clinical discussions.

The design team leveraged new highly efficient and anti-ligature chilled beams to heat and cool the two floors, utilizing existing duct work to maintain existing ceiling heights, and removing the prior fan coil units at the perimeter windows to address patient safety concerns.

The EDAP suite is a five-bed assessment area located off the Emergency Department (ED). Designed as the first step in the behavioral health admissions process once patients are medically cleared in the ED, the EDAP includes five patient rooms with a toilet and shower as well as a place to store their belongings while they are being evaluated. Designed around a small common area, the circular design allows clear visibility from the nursing station. The EDAP is located directly adjacent to the security office of the hospital for emergencies.

The project team also included:

- Construction Manager: PC Construction
- Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Fire Protection (MEP/FP) Engineer: Fitzmeyer & Tocci
- Structural Engineer: Simpson Gumpertz and Heger
- Acoustical Consultant: Cavanaugh Tocci.

“Behavioral health design requires a deep level of both experience and empathy. Margulies Perruzzi worked closely with our staff – both clinical and facilities – to ensure we were able to stay within our budget and yet deliver a high-quality space for our patients,” said Nathan Howell, president of Southern Maine Health Care.

“The design team did a great job of listening to how we care for our patients and how we would be using the space. The new units will allow us to deliver a higher level of care to behavioral health patients,” said Diane Mankus, RN, senior director of behavioral health services at Southern Maine Health Care.

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