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## **What owners expect from a contractor: No surprises, no risks and no hassles**

October 29, 2008 - Spotlights

Suffolk Healthcare has built a strong reputation for providing superior client service to hospital and healthcare facility owners nationwide. Our specialized team of dedicated individuals works tirelessly to understand how healthcare facilities operate so that construction projects proceed without costly or time-consuming disruptions to patient care or facility operations.

Our teams provide healthcare clients the resources, stability and economies of scale of Suffolk Construction Company with the personalized client service, in-depth knowledge and project experience of a specialized construction firm committed to healthcare construction. In short, we offer our healthcare clients the best of both worlds.

To help reinforce our understanding of our healthcare clients' unique needs and requirements, Suffolk Healthcare recently conducted more than 25 interviews with healthcare facility directors, nurse managers, architects, medical equipment vendors, subcontractors, and hospital board members to gain an even better understanding of how healthcare clients approach construction projects and what they value most in a general contractor. The findings confirmed much of what our healthcare construction professionals had already surmised—a successful healthcare project simply means "no surprises, no risks and no hassles" for the owner.

Due to the nature of ongoing patient care and the fact that most hospital renovation and construction projects occur in occupied facilities, healthcare owners are looking for experienced contractors who understand their business and their risk, and can provide top-shelf service to them, their facilities and engineering departments, and their architects. Owners in this sector do not want to risk hiring a contractor with little or no healthcare construction experience. Quite frankly, healthcare owners have a low tolerance for mistakes, since they have too much to lose if there is an incident during construction and little to gain working with an inexperienced contractor. They expect consistent results and demand a contractor that has expertise working in healthcare environments, excellent training credentials, and an exceptional safety program.

Most construction projects are under tight budget restrictions, making detailed and accurate preconstruction planning a major benefit to clients. Healthcare owners also depend on experienced mechanicals and utilities experts to address potential problems inherent in a healthcare facility's design.

When partnering with healthcare owners, our team works as an extension of the hospital's operations team while complying with all local and state-mandated practices and procedures relating to construction in healthcare facilities. We understand the need to maintain a high level of cleanliness at all times during construction. Open, honest, and clear communication is vital in fostering a team atmosphere. We are in constant communication with the owner, oftentimes providing daily updates on the progress of the work. Communication with facilities staff, doctors,

nurse managers, housekeeping staff, and even patients and their families helps to ensure that construction activities are not impacting daily operations. Poor communication, minimal collaboration or lack of follow through with these important end users can hinder opportunities for repeat work at most healthcare facilities.

Based on Suffolk Healthcare's wealth of experience in the healthcare sector and recent research into the needs of healthcare clients, it is evident that proactive problem solving throughout a healthcare project, superior preplanning, predictability on budget and schedule, safety and minimal impact on healthcare delivery are the keys to a successful construction project and long-term client/contractor relationship in the healthcare sector.

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