

A Good Move

Effectively Transitioning to a New Hospital Helps Maximize the Investment in a State-of-the-Art Facility

Building a new hospital today requires a substantially larger financial investment than in past decades. Nevertheless, we are in the midst of an unprecedented healthcare building boom. Health systems are willing to make the financial commitment to replace aging, outdated hospitals. The new consumer-focused facilities are transforming healthcare and giving their owners an edge in a highly competitive marketplace.

Simply shelling out money for the latest amenities, equipment and technology does not ensure transformational results. For a new hospital to function at its full potential, people will need to work in new ways—creating new care processes and using new technologies. That's why those moving into a new hospital can benefit from transitioning services that go beyond managing the physical move to the new building.



Ideally, transition planning begins when a new hospital is in the planning stage. Starting early helps ensure that the new facility and the staff will be able to function optimally on opening day and beyond.

Holistic Approach Optimizes Investment

RTKL, a designer of advanced healthcare facilities, offers both physical and clinical transitioning services. Physical transitioning consists of planning and managing the move into a new hospital. Clinical transitioning helps people function effectively in the new environment. At RTKL, these services are led by nurses who have first-hand experience with hospital procedures, as well as knowledge of hospital building design from working with architects and user groups during the design process. This makes them ideal facilitators to help caregivers, physicians and staff function optimally in a new hospital environment from day one.

Complete transitioning services, together with expertise in healthcare design and technologies, create a holistic approach aimed at optimizing a client's three biggest investments—the new building, its technology and the employees who work there.

THE PHYSICAL MOVE Early Groundwork Paves the Way

A facility transition is a monumental undertaking with many components. Providers need to consider what communication tools will be used to keep staff informed of the move, what equipment will be required to support the move, and how patients will be moved.

One of the first steps in successfully transitioning to a new facility is identifying a dedicated internal project manager to coordinate day-to-day planning efforts. This person will serve as the conduit for the entire endeavor and be responsible for team integration. He must have excellent organization and communication skills and a good working knowledge of a facility's operations.

Several more key individuals also will need to participate in the move. They should be experienced

INPATIENT MOVE SCENARIO



This inpatient move scenario is one element of a plan being developed by RTKL for a client that expects to move 300 patients to a new facility next summer. Transition consultants are helping define the work that needs to be done and how to do it most efficiently.

hospital staff members familiar with the culture of the hospital, its clinical processes and administrative requirements. Collectively, this group is known as the “transition team.” Sub-teams within it will tackle work that needs specialized expertise. The nature of the sub-teams will vary based on the complexity of the project; but at a minimum, logistics, training, information technology and communications will need to be addressed.

Ideally, the combined work of these sub-teams will lead to a quick and easy physical move, as well as a smooth clinical transition. In the real world, however, most team members will not have moved into a new hospital before and will benefit from some experienced guidance.

Transition Consultants Provide Move Expertise

Transition consultants can help define the work to be done and how to do it most efficiently. They collaborate with the internal transition teams to make sure

all the bases are covered. Because of the complexity of the undertaking, transition consultants should be brought in while the project is in the planning stage.

PeaceHealth Oregon Region anticipates moving approximately 300 patients and 30 percent of the equipment at an existing hospital into new facilities at Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend. The move will not take place until the summer of 2008, but planning with RTKL’s transition consultants already is under way. One of the first orders of business was to establish the internal teams and clearly define individual roles and responsibilities.

“You can never get started too early with this type of effort,” said David Whipple, assistant administrator for Ancillary Services at Sacred Heart Medical Center and the leader of PeaceHealth Oregon Region’s Transition and Transformation Team. “We wanted to ensure that every aspect of the move would be well planned and well executed. That required us to start early to develop the right teams, identify all

our needs, and educate the entire staff about every aspect of the move. Doing so has helped ease some of the stress that this type of move creates.”

THE CLINICAL TRANSITION **Understanding Building's Design** **Leads to Effective Use**

Clinical transitioning should not be forgotten when moving into a new hospital. Without this service, staff and physicians who were not involved in the design may start working without understanding why the building is designed the way it is. Furthermore, they may not be familiar with the new equipment and technology. This defeats the purpose of a building designed for advanced clinical processes and will diminish the owner's return-on-investment in a high-tech hospital.

Advanced Facilities Call for Advanced Processes

Most new hospitals are moving from the traditional nurse station to a decentralized, patient-focused, point-of-care delivery model made possible by technology. With the electronic medical records, portable communication devices and computers, and numerous small workstations throughout a patient unit, nurses no longer need to spend much time at a central nurse station. They can stay near their patients, keep in touch electronically and save steps. But for nurses used to working from a central station, this advanced model means learning new clinical processes and the effects on day-to-day operations. The location of equipment, methods of patient documentation, communication processes, and nurse-physician interactions all will be different. Failure to educate staff and physicians inevitably will lead to frustration and dissatisfaction with the new facility.

Consultants Help Ensure Effective Processes

A critical component of the work related to clinical transitioning is developing and documenting new operational processes that will be employed in the new facility. A transition consultant with clinical expertise can help ensure that all processes are identified and that a program is in place to complete the process work.

“For us, moving into our new hospital facility is more than simply doing business at a new location—it is a chance for us to redefine our entire patient experience,” said Jill Hoggard Green, chief operating officer and hospital administrator



at PeaceHealth Oregon Region. “We have more than 100 teams taking each process apart and re-designing them to improve clinical quality and the patient experience, as well as reduce the chance of patient harm or wasting resources. We want to create an environment at Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend that is simple to navigate, both for patients and families as well as our employees.”

Regardless of the scope of a project, day-to-day processes will change as a result of a new facility design, and all staff members, including physicians, need to be a part of the process re-engineering. Sufficient time needs to be programmed for new process training before the relocation. In addition, new equipment and new technology requires considerable staff training prior to the move.

An administrator at a health system that recently underwent a major transition emphasized the importance of walking staff through the new facility as often as possible prior to the actual move. This gives them the opportunity to get comfortable with the new building and to see first-hand that some long-established processes will need to change.

New Facility, New Opportunity

A new hospital most likely is a once-in-a-lifetime



Most new hospitals are designed for a decentralized, point-of-care delivery model as seen at the Center for Advanced Heart Care at the University of Kansas Hospital. Clinical transition training can help staff and physicians accustomed to working from a central nurse station learn new clinical processes.

opportunity to rethink hospital design and improve overall healthcare quality. Caregivers and staff will need to let go of their old ways of doing things and capitalize on opportunities the new facility offers. A transition management plan is essential to facilitate this new beginning.

Providers should allow for sufficient planning time, get staff involved in the transition as soon as possible, and be prepared to address the day-to-day operations and processes that will change as a result of the new design. A well-managed transition will help ensure that the physical move into the hospital goes smoothly and that employees can function effectively in their new, technologically advanced environment from the day it first opens. ■



Virginia Schneider, RN, MSN, and Alice Wainwright RN, MSN, CNNA, FACHE, are transitioning specialists with RTKL. They each have more than 25 years of nursing

and management experience. Schneider can be reached at vschneider@rtkl.com, and Wainwright can be reached at awainwright@rtkl.com. For more information about RTKL, please visit rtkl.com.

Healthcare
Solutions



Meditrine Bed Light



Circadian Nightlights



AIEA Ambient/Exam Luminaire



I-Lume Exam Luminaire

The One Source for All Your Lighting Needs.

Cooper Lighting offers the most comprehensive healthcare product line in the marketplace.

From lobbies to exterior applications, and everything in-between, Cooper has lighting solutions to meet the specific requirements of hospitals, surgery centers, MRI facilities, and other healthcare environments.

Email healthcaresolutions@cooperlighting.com to request our new catalog.



COOPER Lighting

www.cooperlighting.com

CHECK READER SERVICE NO. 23 AT WWW.MCDMAG.COM/E-RESPONSE