



No room for mistakes

WOMEN AND INFANTS HOSPITAL | RHODE ISLAND

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Resource Group



install new equipment | test new equipment | train on new equipment | organize move team | train on systems | manage inspections and compliance | plan migration routes | simulate potential scenarios | plan for equipment | organize move team | train on safety practices | test air quality and infection control | obtain licensi | simulate potential scenarios | plan for emergencies | communicate with patients and families | schedule patient and infection control | obtain licensing and accreditation | schedule when to activate services | train on new co

No room for mistakes

How transition planning helped keep high-risk hospital patients safe



The largest obstetric facility in Rhode Island, Women and Infants Hospital delivers nearly 10,000 babies a year. In June 2009, they had just finished building their new South Pavilion, which boasted the largest single-family-room neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in the United States. The new NICU would provide five times more space than their existing facility and offer better quality care for premature and ill newborns.

But the hospital had a dilemma: how could they move into their new facility without putting the hospital's most critical patients at risk?

Kimberly Silvestri, the hospital's director of facilities development and space planning, had more than a decade of experience with construction and renovation. She had a highly-qualified, five-person team that oversaw ongoing projects at the hospital. But neither she nor most of the hospital staff had ever dealt with a transition of that scale.

"Our foremost concern was patient safety," recalls Silvestri. "We were moving not only premature babies in the NICU, but also high-risk pregnant women from our antepartum floor."

When the hospital staff began thinking about the myriad details that comprised the moving process—from training on new phone systems and equipment to laying out routes and planning for emergencies—Silvestri realized they needed additional horsepower.

"We have fabulous, skilled, dedicated staff," explains Silvestri. "But we needed to let them focus on what they do best—caring for patients and running the hospital. We simply could not effectively manage the transition in addition to our day-to-day operations."

INSIDE SCOOP



Edward Hernandez specializes in services for healthcare facilities through Balfour Resource Group, a subsidiary of Balfour Beatty Construction. Balfour Resource Group provides medical equipment planning and management, strategic capital equipment planning, technology implementation, and transition planning for healthcare projects across the U.S. To contact Edward, email ejhernandez@balfourresourcegroup.com.



Photography courtesy of Al Weems

Virtual training for big moves

To help them consider all possible risks, create contingency plans, and train staff for the transition, the hospital turned to Balfour Resource Group, a team of specialists in planning and implementation processes for healthcare facilities.

Silvestri remembers when the hospital staff first met Edward Hernandez, vice president of Balfour Resource Group: “Letting go of the reins was difficult for our staff—they really wanted to own the transition themselves. Through sensitivity, understanding, and taking the time to listen to their concerns and explain the process to them, he earned their trust.”

“It was a very emotional move,” says Hernandez. “When the life of an infant is in your hands, you want to make sure you’re taking every precaution.”

With an aggressive timeline ahead, Hernandez organized a 20-person move team. The team used a lifelike baby mannequin in simulations of the moving process and determined the time they would need to move each patient. They planned for possible complications, gave all the staff measurable milestones for training, and defined roles for moving day.

“Everyone had a role,” says Silvestri, “including the families of our patients. We knew that they would want to be involved, but we needed only medical staff present to safely move the patients. So we made sure the families were fully aware of how we would be moving their loved ones and gave them the task of taking their personal belongings to the new rooms.”

By moving day, all 200 members of the NICU staff felt comfortable in their new space and confident about the transition, because they had dealt with the “what-ifs” in simulations. For example, they set up two resuscitation stations along the route in case a baby stopped breathing during the move. They also stationed extra security to keep the corridors clear.

On September 15, at 7:30 a.m., the team began moving 15 high-risk mothers to new beds, followed by 68 fragile infants—the smallest only two weeks old and weighing little more than one pound. Even with the addition of two babies, who were admitted during the transition, the process ran seamlessly, taking only eight hours to complete.

“Construction projects are complicated, but people tend to forget that what you do after closeout—preparing a building for occupants—is just as complex,” says Silvestri. “We wanted an attention to detail and a commitment to excellence in our transition partner. That’s what we looked for, and that’s what we found.”

Next year, when the staff at Chicago Children’s Memorial move into their new, state-of-the-art, 15-story Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital, they’ll be prepared for the unexpected. That’s because they’re practicing in a Second Life simulation modeled after the real world. In their virtual hospital, they’re practicing drills for every contingency—in a risk-free environment.



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Balfour Resource Group

Balfour Resource Group is a professional services firm that has earned a reputation for service, performance, quality, and achievement in planning and managing medical equipment and health care facility transitions. Headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, with offices in Dallas, Texas; Cleveland, Ohio; Boston, Massachusetts; and San Antonio, Texas, the organization is recognized as one of the nation's leading firms in planning, budgeting, and delivery of healthcare facilities with a distinguished reputation for innovative planning and delivery approaches that exceed client expectations.

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