

Facility management: A key pillar of safe patient care





Whether a hospital has five patient beds or 5,000, all healthcare facilities exist to fulfill the same purpose: to provide high-quality and compassionate medical care to the communities they serve. And that means providing safe, functional and supportive facilities. The role healthcare facility management teams play in delivering on this mission can be pivotal—they literally lay the foundation for patient-safe facilities.



It takes a team

When organizations plan to build a healthcare facility, it's only natural to engage the help of an architect, contractor, and engineers. Bringing a team into the fold that also understands the clinical side of the business, however, is often overlooked. A clinically focused approach from the beginning keeps a construction project patient centered. Such approach considers how to reduce and control hazards and risks; prevent accidents and injuries; and maintain safe conditions within the built environment, while creating a space for optimal workflow, allowing organizations to set up for success and avoid costly rework from happening.

An expert healthcare facility management team that is clinically oriented will help shape effective multidisciplinary plans, education and monitoring. For example, the leaders will be able to assess the space, equipment, and resources needed to safely and effectively support their clinical services. All staff, including administrators, technicians, and clinicians should be educated about the facility and encouraged to report situations that pose risks. Furthermore, comprehensive, facility-wide risk assessment processes should be developed and monitored that result in establishing key performance criteria to measure safety risks.

Generally, a well-balanced facility management plan should include:



- Evaluation of how the building(s) design promotes safety and compliance, improves clinical workflows and contributes to safe patient outcomes



- Robust maintenance strategies to maximize operations, equipment longevity, and patient and staff safety



- Well-defined performance improvement and project management tools



- Proactive responses to risks and monitoring outcomes



- Prevention of hazards and accidents



- Education on the impact the physical environment has on safe and quality patient care

The tenants of facility management excellence

To affect facility management operational excellence, healthcare leaders should foster a culture of standardized processes and policies that focus on eight important areas:

1. **Safety.** Maintaining buildings, grounds and equipment that maximize safety for patients, staff and visitors.
2. **Security.** Safeguarding assets from loss, destruction, tampering or unauthorized use.
3. **Hazardous wastes.** Handling, using, storing, and properly disposing of hazardous materials.
4. **Fire safety.** Protecting patients, visitors, and staff from fire and smoke.
5. **Medical equipment.** Selecting, maintaining and using equipment in a manner that reduces safety risks.
6. **Utility systems.** Maintaining electric, water and other systems to minimize risks and operating failures while reducing the organization's carbon footprint.
7. **Emergency management.** Preparing for emergencies and disasters by regularly testing and improving the organization's emergency management plan.
8. **Construction and renovation.** Designing and building appropriate spaces and minimizing possible risks to patients, staff and visitors during the construction phase.

From planning, design, and construction to operationalizing and maintaining a building or space, these focus areas consider every aspect of facility management. By working to implement best practices in each of them, healthcare organizations can forge a path toward creating spaces that optimize patient safety and outcomes—and set the gold standard.



General facility management responsibilities



Coordination

- Designing a floor layout that optimizes efficiency for caregivers
- Developing a system where facilities and clinical staff work together to improve patient room turnover and wait times for appointments, tests and procedures
- Overseeing the sharing of equipment and resources



Safety

- Designing buildings, grounds and equipment in a way that doesn't pose a hazard to patients, staff or visitors
- Conducting regular safety rounds to identify and mitigate risk within the physical environment.
- Preparing for the possibility of disasters (natural or human-made)



Security

- Conducting regular security assessments to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities
- Identifying security sensitive areas and monitoring who has access to the space
- Protecting patient data and electronic medical records
- Develop strategies to prevent workplace violence

For information on how our advisory services experts can help your facility management team as it works to create spaces that optimize patient safety and outcomes, call 630-268-7400 or visit <https://www.jcrinc.com/products-and-services/advisory-services/environment-of-care/building-construction-and-design-advisory-services/>