

Construction

A smart approach to powering today's health care

As today's hospitals and health care facilities face growing dependence on new technology to deliver enhanced patient care, there are also new challenges to ensure successful integration and adequate electrical power. To succeed, building owners and engineers must take a fresh approach to specifying and managing the functionality of their critical systems.

• New technology. Higher expectations. With everything from hospital building automation systems to patient room environmental control systems becoming increasingly "smarter," requirements to power and integrate modern health care instrumentation also are changing dramatically. Having a strategic approach in these technology-driven facilities is critical for success.

• Finding the right partner. Hospitals and health care facilities place an especially high value on the capabilities of their specialty contractor partners because of importance of patient experience and life safety. Having solid working partnerships is vital for



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building owners and operators as they face the growing challenges to expand and maintain these facilities.

Choosing the right specialty contractor is an important decision in ensuring that health care facility management can safely and cost effectively meet patient needs. It's important to find

an electrical contractor who specializes in health care and understands the unique requirements and risks. Another consideration should be to hire a firm whose electricians are trained and experienced with essential health care systems and working environments, including infection control risk assessment.

• Technology integration and standardization. Management at hospitals and other large health care networks must also look beyond their needs for electrical construction and services to their technology, building control and specialty systems.

Today's struggle with integration of technology is often compounded by facing the challenge late in the design process and treating it as a silo outside of the mechanical and electrical systems. Electrical contractors with equal technology expertise have the potential to bring strong value in teaming with the hospital facility, nurse and information technology staffs in achieving the facility's automation, integration and specialty system goals. With the trend toward the internet of things, open



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A procedure room from the University of Colorado Hospital

architecture and all systems tied to a common network, the opportunity to drive efficiency and standardization is refreshingly present.

• New construction partnering. Hiring and engaging the right specialty contractors early in the design has proven to save time and money. Because most hospital and health care construction is fast-tracked, the risk of noncompatible design can be very costly. A good specialty contractor integrated with the design team also will focus its expertise in listening and providing solutions to help manage cost and quality while maintaining the expected project schedule.

Consider the design of circuitry size, quantity and locations for medical instrumentation. Because medical instrumentation capabilities are evolving at a fast pace, final purchase decisions and exact specifications often lag the facility design. Strong electrical contractors can team with designers and hospital staff to scrub the design and prevent costly and untimely rework. From an operational perspective, these checks and balances can also help move facilities

toward standardization.

• Lifecycle partner. An experienced specialty contractor can also bring value to a complex facility as a lifecycle partner. There is no better example of this than a hospital network.

When deciding whether to repair or replace something, building management should take a broader look at a health care facility's longer-term lifecycle benefits. When considering next steps and the best options to move toward becoming a more intelligent health care facility, start with prioritizing the item that will have the largest impact to your customers in the areas of comfort, safety and performance.

In summary, the days of managing health care facility operations through antiquated systems are being replaced with IT-centric facility managers monitoring IoT field devices and leveraging analytics in more complex and transformational ways. For both your new and existing facilities, consider partnering with an experienced health care specialty contractor with expertise across all systems and technology to help ensure your ongoing success.▲



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The CT scanner equipment at Longmont United Hospital

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