

GREENING HEALTH CARE/FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND DESIGN/HEALTH TECHNOLOGY:

Innovative and efficient health-care design including the greening of health-care facilities. An update on the impact of information technology on health care delivery including electronic health-care records and telehealth programs.

Rouge Valley construction projects address needs of growing patient community

Mount Sinai Hospital goes greener and gets cooler with new energy source

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CPC # 40065412

Providing more than care: Suite dreams for Maimonides residents



Maimonides resident Bella Silverstone chats with RN Angela Palmer-Jarvis in her newly renovated room.

By Lisa Blobstein

Maimonides Geriatric Centre in Montreal, Quebec just completed the renovation of all 255 private and 66 semi-private resident rooms as part of the Suite Dreams Capital Renovation Campaign. This 7 million dollar project was entirely paid for by donor dollars thanks to the Maimonides Foundation.

The renovations include dramatic changes to furniture,

lighting, flooring, closets, bathrooms and other critical areas. Many advances in geriatric furnishings have occurred since the 1960's when Maimonides was originally built. The Suite Dreams Campaign enables our residents to enjoy the simple things we take for granted. For example, those in wheelchairs are now able to see themselves in the new angled bathroom mirrors- a seemingly minor detail with a major impact on self-worth. Shelving has also

been brought to a comfortable level that is within reach for all residents and grab bars have been installed to make it easier for staff and residents.

"The Suite Dreams renovation really makes Maimonides look and feel like our residents home. The environment is secure and welcoming not only to residents but to their families and the staff. We are so appreciative to the Foundation for giving our residents sweet dreams," says Lucie Tremblay,

Director of Nursing and Clinical Services.

Top professionals in the field of long term health-care facilities were enlisted to design this project. Safety was a prime concern of the renovations. It is also important to take into consideration the needs of those with dementia and other cognitive difficulties. Residents with visual and mobility impairment now move about more safely on new state-of-the-art organic flooring called "marmoleum"

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featuring subtle muted shades and a matte finish along with infection-fighting properties. The strategic placement of contrasting colours allows residents to perceive depth and clearly identify their rooms. Lighting fixtures contribute to the creation of a home-like environment in hallways and in the individual rooms. Lighting systems can also be controlled to adjust ambience according to the time of day and level of activity. The lighting also helps prevent falls as many residents have poor eyesight.

"I love my new room," says Roberta Adelman in a taped testimonial that is featured on the suite dreams website. The furniture is modern-looking and it's really special. It's almost like I am going back home," she adds.

Physical challenges, behav-

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Engaging staff in environmental responsibility

By Aura Rose

Is your facility a great place to work? Are your colleagues engaged in what they do? If your answer is no, don't despair, you are certainly not alone. A Gallup study showed up to 70 per cent of employees are disengaged, leaving immense untapped resources left untouched in the workplace every day.

In health care the level of staff engagement has a direct impact in several areas. According to a Gallup Business Impact Analysis, health-care organizations with higher employee engagement experience: Lower mortality and complications index, reduced nosocomial infections and improved financial performance.

Additionally, the study showed a direct linkage between employee engagement and workers' compensation claims. Health-care employees in the bottom 50 per cent of engaged employees experienced accident rates nearly three times higher than that of workgroups in the top 50 per cent. Gallup also analyzed three years of inpatient satisfaction data and found a significant correlation between employee engagement and patient satisfaction. More specifically, employee engagement seems to influence patient satisfaction — not vice

versa — implying that improving employee engagement can help hospitals improve patient satisfaction.

It certainly seems worth it to engage staff. Combine that with how concerned many health-care professionals are about climate change and engaging employees in environmental responsibility is a win-win. Many health-care professionals recognize there is a problem and are actually much more environmentally conscious at home than at work. They have a huge desire to make their facility as green as it can be. If we can leverage this desire into action we can improve morale and help the planet at the same time.

So how we do engage staff in green work? First, you need to understand what your facility may be doing already, and what's possible. Find out if you have a Sustainability Coordinator or a Green Team that you can work with. If not, investigate what others are doing before you start. Get on the Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare's list-serve (www.greenhealthcare.ca) to connect with like-minded individuals. Last fall, the inaugural Canadian conference on Environmentally Responsible Health Care was held in London, Ontario. You can view most of the presentations from

Ecocare 2008 at <http://www.lhsc.on.ca/ecologic/conference.htm>.

Once you know what your facility is doing and what resources you have (dollars, staff time, other resources), then you can challenge your employees to get involved. Never over-promise or over-commit, the last thing you want is to get a group of highly motivated staff very frustrated because you can't get them the support they need. Let them come up with ideas and take ownership of them. Staff listen most to their colleagues and their immediate supervisor, so by engaging one you engage many.

Remember to always model the behavior you want. It's hard to work for someone on environmental issues who prints out every email they receive, brings a throw away coffee cup from Tim Horton's each morning and does not bother to segregate waste in the OR. Be a leader, not a preacher. Communicate your message effectively to your coworkers by suggesting green options that have worked in your life.

Don't be adverse to starting small, for example, introducing recycling and banning disposable cups just in your department. Ask if you can place green tips about turning off lights and equipment and proper waste segregation in

the staff newsletter. Work with other departments who have a vested interest in what you want to achieve. For example, plant maintenance is always trying to find cost savings. Working with them to reduce energy use is a win-win.

Try a project. Projects are of short duration, but can be time intensive. They can create a positive mood internally and result in positive media coverage. Examples include:

- A community mercury thermometer exchange program, whereby community members are encouraged to bring in their mercury thermometers and receive a free digital one.
- The creation of a healing garden where staff and community members spend one or two weekends creating a beautiful "healing garden" on facility premises.
- A facility give back day where old furnishings and equipment (mainly computers) are offered for free to low income community members.

Sometimes, doing a lot of planning and preparing is not the best choice: a 'Quick win' can be a better way to go. Quick wins can help ease your organization into the green movement by invigorating your employees while getting positive publicity and showing management the savings to be had.

For example, mercury reduction is an easy sell as most people understand how dangerous mercury is. Ask yourself:

- What is the most noticeable environmental problem in this facility?
- What type of initiatives are management and staff likely to support?
- What would be the easiest issue to work on?
- Which department(s) has a number of staff that I know have indicated a desire to take action on the environment?
- What departments should I stay away from? (Due to staff shortage, over-load or reorganization for example)

Most importantly, in engaging staff you need to be patient. Meet people where they are on green issues instead of enforcing your viewpoint. Don't forget the WIIFM - or "What's in it for me?" when dealing with other staff. Not everyone may be as committed to the environment as you are and many need to understand the environmental effects of their actions before they will change.

Aura Rose is the President of Healthwise Communications, providing strategic communication services to health-care clients. For more information, visit www.healthwisecommunications.com

Electronic newborn registration service convenient for new parents

By Jennifer Gillard

Parents of babies born at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) will soon be able to benefit from a new online service that lets them register their baby's birth, get a birth certificate and request their child's Social Insurance Number all at the same time.

A joint project between ServiceOntario and Service Canada, the initiative began

rolling out in selected municipalities in Ontario in the fall of 2007. Currently 60 communities are participating, with a goal to have the newborn registration service available across the province by the end of 2009. Northumberland Hills Hospital went online on Monday, January 26.

In Ontario, a successful birth registration relies on two independent parties submitting information about the birth

to the Office of the Registrar General. These parties are: the designated health professional involved in the birth (e.g., a physician, midwife or nurse), and the parents.

As of January 26, NHH health-care professionals who attend at the birth of a child will be electronically submitting the necessary Notice of Birth form. At the same time, parents of infants born at NHH will receive a Newborn Registration Service postcard with instructions on how to complete their own Statement of Live Birth form online at www.ServiceOntario.ca/newborn. Parents are advised to register their baby within 30 days of birth, so they may obtain essential identity documents; health-care professionals are required to submit their form within two business days.

According to ServiceOntario, increased ease, convenience and speed are the benefits offered to

parents by the new online tool. The birth will be registered in less time and parents can use the online service at any time, day or night. Also, if parents apply for a birth certificate or a Social Insurance Number at the time of registration, they will receive those documents faster as well.

Brenda Weir, Nursing Program Director for Acute Services at NHH, and the Director responsible for the day-to-day operation of NHH's Birthing Suites, says: "Colleagues at hospitals where the service is already available report that parents are very appreciative of the new system. New parents are busy. The more we can do to make life easier for them as they welcome their new family member into the world, the better."

If parents do not have access to online services at their home, they will be directed to access the Internet at any

ServiceOntario counter location or at a local library. Paper Statement of Live Birth forms will continue to be available for parents on request, but for the reasons noted above, the new online tool is the recommended format.

As in the past, there is no charge to parents for either the birth registration or the Social Insurance Number request; birth certificates continue to come with a cost of \$25 (for the short form certificate) and \$35 (for the long form).

Parents who have questions or require assistance with the registration process can contact ServiceOntario toll-free at 1-800-461-2156.

For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca.

Jennifer Gillard is the Director of Corporate Communications at Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg.

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