

HEALTHCARE FACILITY DESIGN TO ENABLE BETTER PATIENT CARE

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Recently, I completed my Fisher Global Service Fellowship as an American Red Cross volunteer placed within the Central Ohio VA Ambulatory Care Center. Based on the growing challenges mental/behavioral healthcare poses for the VA, it has started a new focus on team oriented care. This model, the Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP), brings together a team of Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Nurses, and Social Workers with the same group of Veteran patients to collaborate on the best method of care. The benefits this model can bring to Veterans include continuity of Veteran-centered care to prevent them from getting “lost in the system” and not completing their care. However, given the growth the Central Ohio VA has experienced, the facility’s behavioral health area had little space to allow the correct team working environment for this new model. Therefore, the VA identified that it would need a renovated lease space to place 4 of the 5 BHIP Teams together in a facility dedicated to BHIP. I came onto the project to help them determine the best way to layout this new facility in order to emphasize co-location of BHIP team members, as well as enable smooth patient flow. I also determined the needs of the facility from an industrial engineering facility design and planning perspective to help determine a course of action in order to activate 6 months later.



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SO WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO START UP A NEW FACILITY?

There is a lot that goes into a facility, from the “big” items like:

- Determining what rooms need to go into the facility
- How big those rooms need to be?
- What kind of volume they expect?
- What healthcare providers will be placed into this facility?

However, there are “little” needs as well:

- Who will order the signs for outside the rooms?
- What will they say?
- When will they be ordered?
- How much will they be?
- How many fire extinguishers and AEDs are needed in the building?
- How do we obtain them?
- Who will maintain and test them?
- What’s the official name of the facility?

Just look around the room you are in right now, there are a lot of things (big and small) that need to be brought together to make the facility you’re in happen!

This is something that happens quite frequently given the number of buildings that we all interact with on a daily basis. Yet many times when a new facility is needed, the job of figuring out how to get the facility built and occupied falls on either the team in charge of the construction (which already has a large task ahead of them to track the leasing or purchasing documents, construction drawings, electric and power needs and more) or the task falls on to the service providers (who are still responsible for their day to day activities and have never opened a facility before). This is a very big task, even for a building that is considered small by many standards since it will only hold 30 providers and their patients. Yet there are many detail-oriented items that if omitted or forgotten could delay the full activation and operation of the facility for days or weeks. Therefore, I came on board to focus on the needs of the facility beyond the construction as this facility is a new and unique change for the VA. Few (if any) other VA facilities exist as a standalone general behavioral health hub for this new BHIP model of care. The VA has many Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) which we fashioned many of the needs for this facility after, but nothing quite like this new facility.

In addition, there is another huge component to all facilities that greatly affects the success of the activation – people! People typically do not like change, particularly if it is sudden and they have to maintain their normal day to day responsibilities in addition to this new change. How can you properly prepare your



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providers to still serve the patients with a minimal “startup curve” that might negatively impact their services? How do you minimize the inconvenience to patients who are just trying to attend their appointment but now have to find and navigate a new facility?

There were also many special layout considerations since the facility was oriented around behavioral health, meaning patient and provider safety at this off site location needed to be taken into account throughout the design process. Even though it is a facility for general behavioral health, and emergencies would still be handled at the main facility, it needed to be designed in such a way that there was a plan of action for any emergencies.

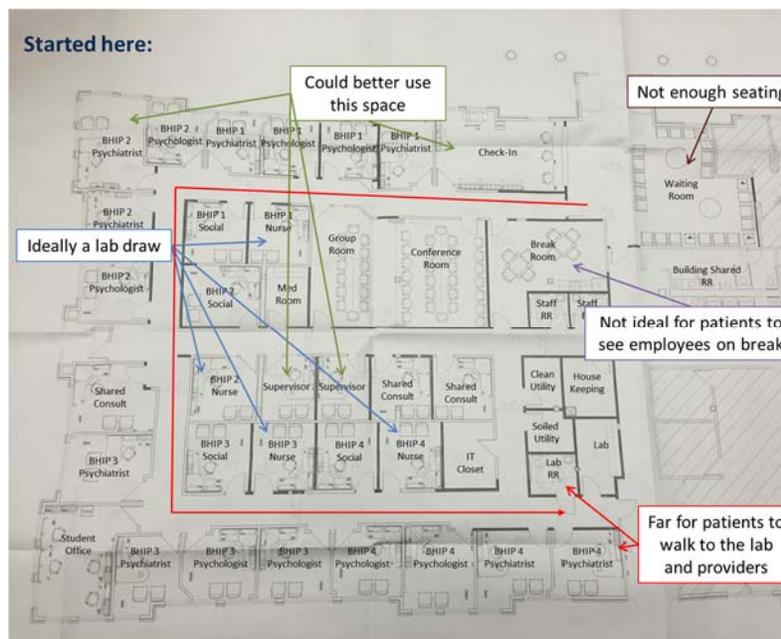
In the 3 months I was at the VA, I worked to address the above questions and many more. Here is an overview of the work I did and turned over to help them prepare for the facility activation. I listed the deliverables under the general facility planning approach I took along with some examples:

Approach Step 1: Requirements Gathering of Facility Needs

- Patient volume and growth analysis
- Space planning research and analysis

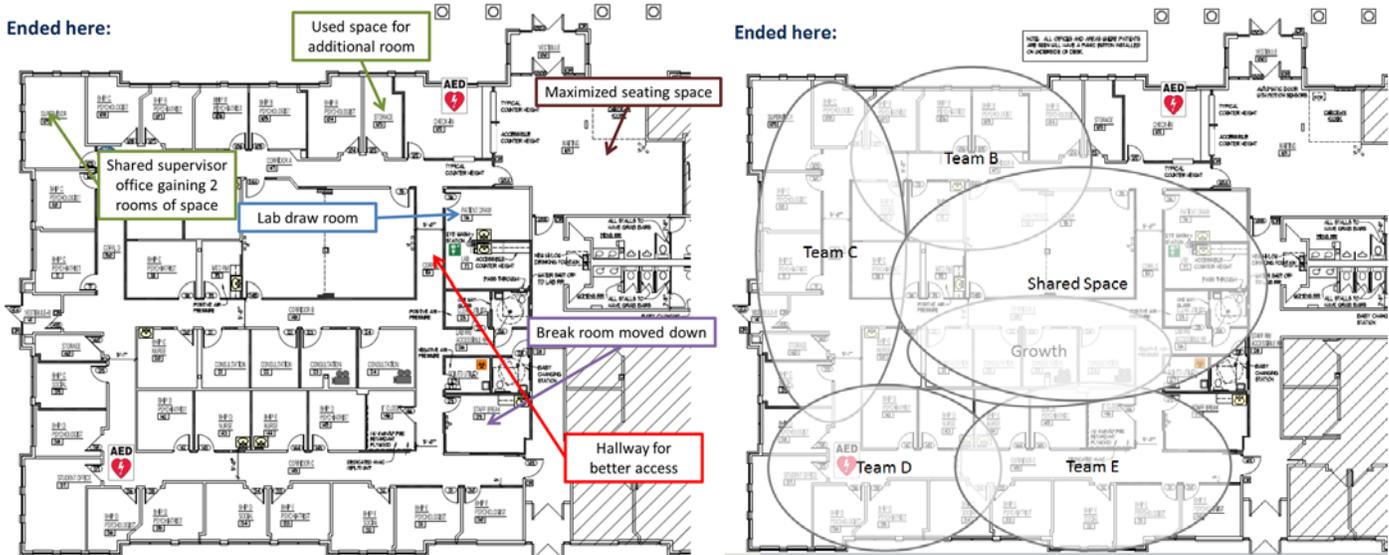
Approach Step 2: Layout Generation

- Layout (including providers, restrooms, parking, shared space, and utility space) (pictured below)





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Approach Step 3: Facility Inputs/Outputs

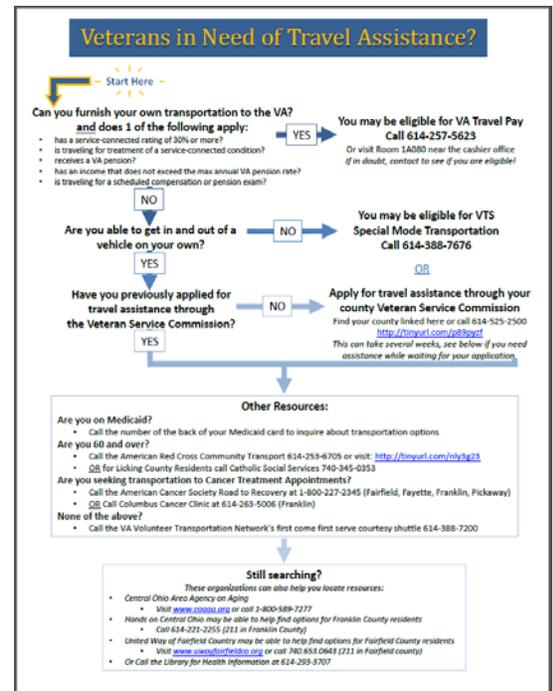
- Facility services required (medical and office supplies, medication delivery, specimen delivery, internal mail, bio-waste disposal, recycling, paper shredding)

Approach Step 4: Facility Contents

- Comprehensive equipment, IT equipment, and furniture list
- Furniture layout to maximize employee safety
- Waiting room seat volume and layout
- Lab processing and lab draw room volume and layout

Approach Step 5: Transitioning Employees and Customers

- Recommendations for patient transition to the new space
- Recommendations for employee transition to the new space
- Reference flow chart for Veteran transportation options who may be inconvenienced by the move (pictured on side)





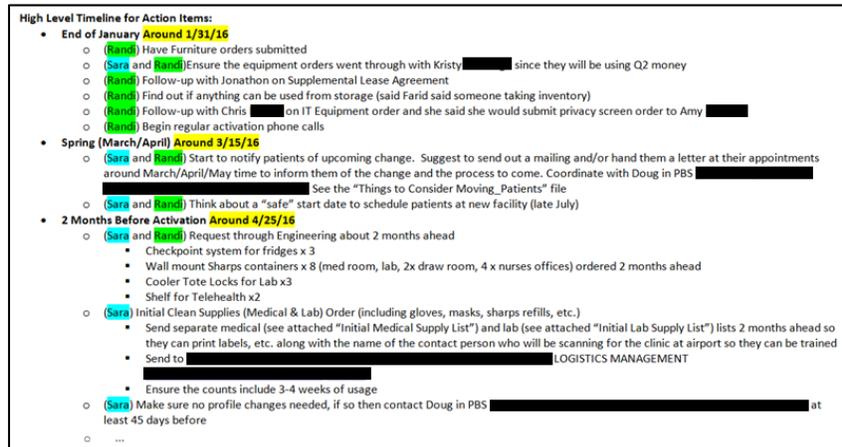
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Approach Step 6: Main Facility Space Planning (post new facility activation)

- Main facility behavioral health layout post behavioral health space activation
Main facility behavioral health 5-year expansion space plan

Approach Step 7: Timeline & Budget

- Action item timeline leading up to activation (pictured below)



Facility Planning is a comprehensive way to think through the operations of a new or renovated facility to ensure it has the best layout for anticipated growth, process optimization, product or people flow, and much more.

- 1. Decrease uncertainty while transitioning the organization
2. Increase productivity and satisfaction of the people involved in the facility transition
3. Prepping for successful operations in the new facility (with a minimal "start-up curve")
4. Quantify savings while "right sizing" the facility

West Monroe offers industry expertise along with industrial engineering tools, software and experience in Facility Layout, Design and Planning. This adds up to a comprehensive solution offering that was able to be offered to the VA and our Veterans free of cost by the American Red Cross and the West Monroe Partners Fischer Global Service Fellowship Program.



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While the facility is not set to activate until late 2016, the feedback on the deliverables prepared for the remainder of the project was overwhelmingly positive. Additionally, savings (of tax payer dollars) were achieved through cost avoidance of clarifying the correct needs for the space and finding and allocating resources that otherwise may have had to been bought for the activation. The value of this savings is approximately \$92,000. The progress of the facility will be tracked by maintaining contact with the VA throughout the year to quantify the gains as well as take away lessons learned.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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