

Deaconess Hospital Cincinnati, OH

Deaconess Hospital sits high on a hill overlooking downtown Cincinnati. The hospital has a storied past, central to healthcare in the city from the current hospital site for over a century. In early 2006, the support service departments were



❖ Dave Ferrell,
Chief Operating
Officer

struggling. Work orders were not completed on time, the hospital did not have the clean, inviting look that patients expected, and morale was low. Interim COO Dave Ferrell, determined to refocus the hospital on exceptional customer-focused care, looked for outside expertise to reinvigorate these services.

A New Model

Multiple support services had been managed by a single in-house Director in a tightly integrated model. The hospital



❖ Barb Lohr,
Director of
Communications
& Marketing

needed a new solution, and it quickly narrowed the choice to Crothall. "We looked for a company that had support and expertise available for each distinct discipline that we were purchasing, yet provided one internal point of contact so I could effectively supervise their efforts. Crothall has provided just that," says Ferrell. In addition to Facilities Management and Environmental Services, Crothall has centralized Patient Transportation, and Morrison, Crothall's sister company, was also brought in to overhaul the Food program.

Each department is managed by a separate specialist Director focused on the unique challenges of each service. To simplify administration, Crothall designated Jeff Ruemmele, Director of Facilities Management, as General Manger. Jeff's role is to not only manage the day-to-day operations of his department, but also to coordinate certain administrative functions of the other departments to ensure they are unified in their goals. This solution gives the hospital a single main point of contact, while ensuring operational excellence.

Better Management Yields Better Performance

Barb Lohr, Director of Communications & Marketing, has noticed a clear difference: "In many ways, Deaconess was at loose ends when Crothall came on board. Our processes

A UNIFIED TEAM of Specialists



“Crothall’s people are team players... They’ve made a huge difference at Deaconess.”

were broken. Things just didn’t get done. Crothall’s one point of contact provides accountability. They have the knowledge and the expertise, led by a very capable manager who is always available. Crothall’s people are team players; they sit at our management table and contribute, and we in turn support them. They’ve made a huge difference at Deaconess.”



Crothall started by reevaluating the service staff. The assumption had been that they all needed to be replaced, but through interviews, Crothall determined that most had potential. In fact, 70% of the employees were rehired by Crothall and are now delivering great results. The key was the motivation and morale that comes from better management. According to Ann Ramer, Administrative Assistant,

“The transition from hospital employment to Crothall has been a positive experience with much needed improvements. Crothall has provided the crew with fantastic leadership and a positive, upbeat attitude that is carried throughout the day. Everyone is happier!” Barb Lohr adds, “Crothall was able to keep employees whose attitude was in alignment with their philosophy, but they’re different now, because they’re well managed. The workers found ‘new pride,’ as they describe it.”

First Impressions, Lasting Results

To infuse hotel-style hospitality, Crothall has made some minor but noticeable improvements. The valet service, once stationed at the back entrance, has been moved around front. And the front entrance has been given a makeover, with large attractive flower beds and uniformed attendants to greet patients and visitors with smiles. Elevators have been modernized, and a project is underway to brighten the garage to make it more welcoming. The Maintenance team has even installed new TVs and cable hookups in the patient rooms. These touches, combined with the new level of cleanliness, have impacted patient satisfaction positively. Patient satisfaction results

❖ Valet service has been moved to the newly decorated front entrance.

have increased from the mid 80s to the mid 90s over the last year.

Work orders are now completed quickly and completely. During the last three months, the department has completed 99% of emergency requests and 99% of patient requests. Documentation and tracking of life safety and utility management compliance programs was improved, and in November 2006, the hospital was fully accredited following a successful Joint Commission survey.

Patient Transportation has been improved since the department was centralized. Although this move was initially resisted by some areas of the hospital, transports are now performed faster, with 89% having a response time of under 20 minutes. Patient and client satisfaction surveys are at 90% for the department.

Team Players

To give the support services a unified feel to the hospital staff, Crothall created a call center to field the various requests. They are routed to the proper department, and tracked to make sure they are accomplished. Barb Lohr explains, “The fact that you can always call Jeff Ruummele and he will make sure it’s done is a huge relief. Now when you pick up the phone, people answer. Work orders are actually processed. We aren’t told to call someone else.”

General Manager Jeff Ruummele believes Crothall has achieved a success story: “There is excitement and pride that is evident in our team members and the hospital is now confident that we can meet their needs quickly.” Dave Ferrell is proud of the choice to go with Crothall: “After just over a year with Crothall we have truly ‘professionalized’ our support services teams and restored confidence in the hotel functions of the hospital. The reporting model using one General Manager has met and exceeded my expectations.”

Benefits Across Departments

- 99% Emergency work orders completed
- 99% Patient work orders completed
- Successful Joint Commission survey
- EVS Patient Satisfaction up from mid-80s to mid-90s
- 89% Transport response time under 20 minutes
- 90% Customer satisfaction for Transport
- 90% Patient satisfaction for Transport