

A Community's Core: Santa Clara Valley's Medical Center

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A strong sense of social obligation is driving the construction Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System's \$300 million replacement hospital in San Jose. "Our mission is very community-focused, as well as patient and care-driven," states Linda Mowry, Director, Seis-

mic Compliance and Modernization Projects for Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. "In fact, our tag line 'Dedicated to the health of the whole community' is behind every decision we make."

The new hospital, she believes, will reflect their care and community dedication. From the LEED certification process (they're tracking

to Gold) to the private rooms, the six-story, 375,000 sf Bed Building 1 project is going above and beyond. "Of course, seismic updates were the impetus for the replacement facility," Mowry allows. "But we had to go a step further and build for the community's future needs as well."

In order to always have "what's next" covered, the Santa Clara or-



Artist's Rendering of the Overhauled Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose, CA

ganization practices campus planning to meet current and future regulatory and legislative mandates. Looking at how new technology facilitates treatment and diagnoses, determining how to prevent infections, all had to be part of the planning process. They also looked to the master plan design, which uses the existing campus footprint. “We made space for the new building by demolishing an outpatient building and several utility outbuildings,” she said.

Mowry credits their good working relationship with OSHPD for the ability to cut nearly a year off the building schedule. “They agreed to a segmented review process, which means we submitted via four basic large project increments. Despite required changes, we’ve been able to keep moving forward.”

She also feels that the use of BIM modeling helped reconfirm the design process, as well as eliminating typical conflicts that arise when participants work in isolation. That means far fewer potentially expensive change orders. “BIM let’s everyone look at the big picture and see their interdependency. It’s allowed us to really move in the field and will help with the actual construction schedule,” Mowry explained.

Because of its function as a community safety net, SCVMC included user groups made of up patients and staff to contribute ideas for the new facility, and conducted site visits at specialty facilities, such as rehab.

“There are eight Valley health clinics county-wide,” said Mowry. “So our delivery model needs to support the clinics, cost effectiveness and overall care quality.”

The new building will have 168 ICU and acute care hospital beds, a rehabilitation therapy center, aquatic therapy pools, support offices, an inpatient-pharmacy and bio-med. There will also be a high caliber staff and physicians to match the services provided. Managing patient needs well meant significant time spent with physicians and nursing staff on design input, such as the importance of adjacencies. For instance, all ICUs are on the 2nd floor, close to operating rooms. Efficient positioning will reduce the typical patient and doctor back-and-forth moves. Built-in flexibility will make it easier to respond to changes in healthcare delivery as well as simplifying any necessary functional modifications in the future.

That future is green. The architectural firm’s LEED specialist is working closely with SCVMC on the application, taking advantage of LEED credit opportunities even during construction. “We diverted 94% of the construction waste away from landfills,” Mowry shared. An inherent commitment to the larger picture of sustainability and environmental responsibility pervades the project. “What we do must be maintained by the county,” she emphasized. “That means making sense economically as well as socially.” They’re on track according to calcu-

lations, projecting to use 43% less energy than California’s Title 24 energy standards. In fact, SCVMC has received notice from PG&E that upon opening, SCVMC qualifies for a \$500,000 one-time rebate. Estimates show about \$450,000 in annual energy savings as a result of their solar program, water efficiencies, lighting hardware and fixtures, as well as an exterior wall system that uses specialized glazed windows to reduce heat loss and gain, and green roofs to reduce storm water runoff.

Because Santa Clara wants to take a holistic approach, they’ve looked at not only LEED certified and approved materials, but also at how everything works together in terms of color, lighting, appeal and function. For example, families can look forward to the inviting, light-filled lobby and entry, as well as some family-specific “nice to have” features. “Feedback from nursing staff was that visiting families often crowded into the waiting areas. Now each floor will have a family waiting room,” she said. Complete with microwave, sofa and TV, these spaces provide a place outside of the patient room for loved ones to decompress.

From strict environmental standards to patient and family needs, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center continues to prove its dedication to the health of their community.

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