



New Iraan Wellness Center Furtheres Hospital Mission

Iraan General Hospital, located in the close-knit community of Iraan in West Texas, is committed to providing quality healthcare for the region it serves. That mission is supported by the new Wellness Center being designed for local residents and patients.

Community members will enjoy many of the same amenities found in a first-class fitness center at this new 21,000 SF facility. Building features include an indoor pool, open gym, multi-purpose room for classes, and an elevated walking track. The walking track will ring the second level, offering views of the gym floor below and the hill country outside.

Near the main entry, a juice bar and waiting area will provide a place for members to gather and socialize. An



outdoor recreation area will offer space for exercise programs coordinated by the Hospital and the local school district. A massage therapy room and a counseling center are located on the second floor. The Center also features a new retail pharmacy with a drive-through window.

The Hospital District has the project on a fast-track to open as quickly as possible. Design began in January, and the Center is scheduled to be complete by December. The entire design Team shares this goal and will accomplish the task as they set a new standard for collaborative success. 



Assessing Your Facility Infrastructure

An aging population requiring increased medical services, changes in healthcare regulations, new technology and medical advances are causing many healthcare facilities to consider renovations or expansions. Before beginning a capital improvement project, it's a good idea to first assess the current facility and infrastructure.

University Health System (UHS) in San Antonio has begun an operating status assessment of its Level 1 Trauma Center hospital, originally built in 1965, before it embarks on an extensive capital improvement plan. O'Connell Robertson is part of a team assessing approximately 280,000 SF of space being considered for future renovations. The assessment will result in performance data as well as updated as-built documents that can be used during the design of the renovations. This will also facilitate remediation of any issues before renovations begin.

While the UHS project is larger than many hospitals will require, there are considerations for conducting a facility conditions assessment that apply to any healthcare facility preparing for an expansion or renovation project.

- **Organize your plan room.** Depending on when your building was constructed, it might be time to organize your drawings to understand what information you do and don't have for your building. Organize your hard copies as well as your digital files. Are your files in .pdf or .dwg format or perhaps .rvt or Revit files? Taking an inventory of all of your drawings will help determine how much work will be required in subsequent steps.

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Wellness Centers Reflect Hospitals' Commitment to Healthy Lifestyles

To prevent illness and encourage a healthy lifestyle, many rural hospitals are adding wellness centers to make up for the absence of private gym facilities in their communities. These facilities are a symbol of the hospitals' commitment to improving the quality of life for the populations they serve.

In addition to providing workout opportunities for the public, wellness centers support physical therapy programs that augment both inpatient and outpatient care. Once a patient completes the full course of treatment, they are encouraged to continue to become a member of the fitness program to maintain their path to good health.

O'Connell Robertson has worked with several long-time rural healthcare clients to develop wellness centers that support both preventative and recuperative programs. Some provide the facilities through an addition to their existing hospital building. The Health and Wellness Center at Lillian Hudspeth Memorial Hospital in Sonora is a new 7,500 SF building that is connected to the existing hospital by a conditioned corridor.

A successful Wellness Center project reflects the unique needs and goals of the hospital and community.

The connection provides convenient access for staff and unifies the appearance of the facility with the hospital. Therapy services are more directly connected to the hospital and private, while wellness areas are more open and accessible to the public. The facility features a swimming pool, exercise and weight area, and physical therapy treatment areas.



Like the Iraan Wellness Center (see page 1), the McCamey Wellness Center is detached from the hospital. The 13,500 SF building has its own unique identity. The facility has large windows facing the highway frontage to show off the indoor pool to prospective members. The indoor walking track, another prominent feature, circles the entire facility and takes advantage of long vistas to the surrounding desert landscape.

For both of these projects, the key to success was thoughtful planning. Before beginning any wellness center, consideration should be given to the following:

- To what degree does the new facility need to focus on physical or cardiac rehab services?

- What elements are important for that community? Is an indoor walking track a priority? An indoor pool?
- What therapy modalities must be accommodated?

A successful project will respond to the unique needs and goals of the hospital, including community priorities, patient needs, site considerations and budget.

For more information, please contact Matt Fabre, AIA, at 512-478-7286 or mfabre@oconnellrobertson.com. 📧

Energy Modeling Provides Data for Cost-Effective Decisions

Incorporating preliminary energy modeling at the beginning of the design phase can help owners make educated decisions that will affect them for years to come. Whether selecting an HVAC system, targeting the optimum efficiency of new equipment or locating a wall with significant glazing, it is beneficial to understand the future impact of that decision.

Energy modeling is an analytical tool that considers the building's location, size, windows, envelope, HVAC system, heating and cooling loads, and energy usage to compare the costs and potential payback of various engineering systems and architectural details. O'Connell Robertson uses energy modeling early in the design process, developing a life cycle cost analysis for various options that could impact the building's energy usage and performance. This helps clients compare not only the initial costs, but also the estimated operating costs over the life of the system, equipment or element, enabling them to make more informed decisions.

As an example, a 100,000 SF hospital that needs to replace its water-cooled chiller might consider two options: one with an Integrated Part Load

Value (IPLV) of 0.45 and a cost of \$90,000,000, and another with an IPLV of 0.35 and a cost of \$100,000. Using the refined data generated from the energy model to perform the payback analysis would show the client that the estimated payback for the more expensive and more efficient chiller would be less than three years for their facility, making it the recommended purchase.

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Sometimes the data indicates that the payback is too long for the investment required. For the Shannon Health System, O'Connell Robertson recently conducted an energy model for three systems being considered for a new medical office building. The data revealed that the energy savings expected from the more expensive systems would not compensate for the higher initial costs for many years.



The selected system provided the lowest initial cost and ultimately the lowest life-cycle costs.

In addition to analyzing systems prior to purchase, an energy model can also be used to estimate the building's annual energy consumption, including lights, HVAC and plug loads. The data can be used to identify possible operating or maintenance issues that could impact energy efficiency.

For hospitals, which operate around the clock, making an "energy smart" decision can provide a payback much more quickly than in buildings that are operated only during standard business hours. Having the data provided by an energy model can help administrators ensure their healthcare facilities are operating most efficiently and cost-effectively.

For more information on O'Connell Robertson's energy modeling services, please contact Nick Patterson, PE, LEED AP BD+C, at 512-478-7286 or npatterson@oconnellrobertson.com. 



Assessing Your Facility Infrastructure *continued*

- **Are your drawings up to date?** Facilities are constantly evolving to keep up with advancing technology and to improve patient care. Renovations, expansions and even small maintenance projects keep your building in flux. Maintaining a current set of drawings, known as as-built drawings, will ensure any new expansion project proceeds more efficiently and successfully. As-built drawings should include the location of fire walls, fire dampers, fire extinguishers, fire exits and updated room names and numbers. These drawings will be critical for JCAHO reviews/inspections.
- **Are your systems working properly?** Review your infrastructure before an expansion, including nurse call, fire alarm and medical gas systems. Special mechanical areas, such as operating rooms, hood rooms and isolation rooms, should be checked for proper pressurization and air exchanges. Making sure

your systems are in working order will help you define the scope of work in your future expansion.

- **How accessible are you?** Before beginning your construction project, be aware that renovations could result in areas of your existing facility being subject to the new 2012 Texas Accessibility Standards. Modifications to the "path of travel" to the new area or the renovated area could require compliance with the new regulations.

Any major construction project requires careful planning, coordination and research. Knowing how a facility is operating, the impact of current code requirements, and the true condition of the structure and systems lays the groundwork for successfully implementing future improvements.

To learn more, contact Jason Puchot, AIA, EDAC, LEED AP, at 210-224-6032 or jpuchot@oconnellrobertson.com. 📧



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