

Why Healthcare Hospitality Pays

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A new trend is emerging in the healthcare industry which has many patients and visitors smiling. Faced with improving their lagging patient satisfaction levels, many hospitals are adapting a hotel style model of hospitality, with related amenities such as valet parking, greeters, courtesy shuttles, and concierge services. While one would normally only expect to find such luxuries at the finer hotels in the world, they are now being delivered every day at more and more hospitals throughout the country. The demand is so great that several companies have chosen to fill the fast growing niche by specializing in hospitality type services specifically for the health care industry.

Not only do the services provide added convenience for patients and visitors, but they can also solve a variety of challenges related to new construction and state mandated seismic upgrade projects which many hospitals are dealing with. If you're still not convinced, Here's are some other reasons why it might pay to incorporate a few health care hospitality solutions...



Scoring Higher on Patient Surveys

Surveys have shown that hospital facilities which deliver extra amenities such as valet parking, patient concierge service and other hospitality related services score higher on patient satisfaction surveys such as HCAHPS (*Hospital Consumer Assessment of Health Care Providers and Systems*), a national, standardized survey of hospital patients. Patients who receive stress-relieving services such as valet parking and concierge are more likely to give favorable overall ratings to the hospital, and would be more likely to recommend the hospital to friends and family.



A Patient Safety Culture

In the early 2000's the Health Care Leadership Alliance, which includes the American Association of Nurse Executives and other health care executives, identified a core set of competencies for executive leaders in health care. Within the context of the core competencies, seven imperatives were identified to develop a patient safety culture and a model of proactive safety was developed which infers that everyone's job is patient safety, in all health care system transactions; this safety mission involves the entire health care team and should include everyone from the physician to the valet parking attendant. The valet and concierge services can play a vital role in the patient safety process and hospitals without these services may be missing an important element to their culture of safety initiative.



Drawing Privately Insured Patients

The AP/San Francisco Chronicle recently examined the new trend of hospitals providing extra incentives to "lure in" patients covered by private insurance, which pays higher reimbursement than government programs such as Medicare or Medicaid. According to the AP/Chronicle, hospitals "are finding it pays to pump up perks" for visitors, such as cooking classes, patient concierges, internet access and valet parking.

Hospital leaders say, "These extra touches all have a purpose, including stress relief."

According to the AP/Chronicle, competition also plays a role in the hospitals adding extra benefits. "If a patient has a free choice to go to this hospital or that hospital, they're going to choose the one that has the better amenities". Rick Gundling, a vice president for the Health Care Financial Management Association, said that extra amenities help attract physicians, who in turn bring in more patients.

At the end of the day, every Hospital has different needs, but they can usually all agree on one thing - patient care is the priority. If that's true, then its easy to see why nearly every Hospital in the country has "Health Care Hospitality" programs at the top of their To-Do Lists.

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