

KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER



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hen patients start to move into the new seven-story, 300,000sf, 235-bed Behavioral Health Center at **KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL CENTER** in January 2009, it will mark the completion of another major step in the campus-wide transformation of this historic Brooklyn institution.

Designed by RBSD Architects, the new building — known as the “R” Building — will feature many improvements from the existing behavioral health facilities, which are currently dispersed throughout the 44-acre campus in

eight different buildings. Improvements derived from the new state-of-the-art facility include enhanced operational efficiencies, the opportunity to share space for similar functions between departments, the ability to maximize the use of wireless technology, as well as the improved staff efficiency derived from the integration of services in close proximity all under one roof. Situated on a primary location on Clarkson Avenue, the exterior conveys a modern image while complementing the iconic red brick towers of the existing hospital campus.

The configuration of each floor promotes operational efficiency, and also helps to create a seamless, comforting, secure environment for patients as they transition from inpatient to outpatient programs on their way to recovery.

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The first floor features the main entrance lobby on Clarkson Street in the front, and the ambulance

entrance in the rear, leading to one of the largest new CPEPs in the country. The second floor houses the chemical dependency unit. The third through fifth floors house adult treatment units. Adolescent



Main Lobby/Reception

building creates an attractive, welcoming image that reflects the hospital's commitment to serving its Brooklyn neighborhood, while enabling hospital staff to provide modern treatment within a state-of-the-art, secure, compassionate environment that promotes the healing process.

For the behavioral health program at Kings County, the Hospital's clinical staff and administration had a new, exciting vision to organize both inpatient and outpatient services for each program on the same floor. This will assist in transitioning patients from inpatient to outpatient programs and create a continuum of care that allows patients to be treated by familiar faces in familiar locations during both stages of treatment.

By featuring both inpatient and outpatient services for chemical dependency patients on the second floor, adults on the third through fifth floors, and children and adolescents on the upper two floors, departmental staff can quickly and efficiently flow from the inpatient to outpatient areas, thereby creating staff efficiency. Patients who become comfortable with their caregivers while part of the inpatient programs can still see these professionals during their outpatient treatment to further facilitate their recovery. This horizontal integration of services likewise adds to the comfort level of the patients during their outpatient recovery because they are being treated in a familiar location.



Typical Nurses Station

treatment is provided on the sixth floor, and child and adolescent services are provided on the seventh floor, along with support spaces such as classrooms and a gymnasium.

The design for the "R" Building Behavioral Health Center was specifically developed to meet the needs of the hospital staff, and to be aesthetically compatible with the site, context, character, and color of the existing Kings County Hospital Center. The new



Comfortable loungers in the spacious Emergency Department

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Opportunities to both share and consolidate functions were explored while addressing the need for security and the complex hierarchy of circulation that results from this co-location of inpatient (locked units) on the same floor as the related outpatient services. The design therefore needed to create separate "night" and "day" areas. To address these issues, the design created two levels of activity for each inpatient unit. The first is in the unit itself and is always available to patients. The other areas of support are between the paired inpatient units and can be secured and rendered inaccessible when necessary. These spaces are at the center of the building and have the potential to be used for outpatients when the demand dictates.

There are a lot of design considerations and requirements that are unique to behavioral healthcare. The interior of the building was designed to provide patients and their families with a friendly, supportive setting that conveys a willingness to accommodate, tolerate, and relieve psychological troubles without judgment or avoidance. This is accomplished through comfortable furnishings that are intimate in scale, but which adhere to New York State Office of Mental Health standards for safety, durability, and tamper-resistance. The design takes advantage of recent advances in quality building materials by using polycarbonate rather than cinderblock walls to create an architecture of "openness" with increased visibility within the building, and more visual connections to the outside world.

Extensive use of borrowed light from the building's many windows has done a great deal to create an open and bright environment that is made warm and hospitable through the use of colorful wall treatments and accent walls. The abundant natural light that permeates the facility has the added advantage of making the space much easier to manage and supervise.

The design features cost-effective fixtures that respond to current concerns for patient safety and suicide prevention, while addressing the goal to create a non-institutional environment of care that promotes the healing process. To meet the needs of this project, RBSD has developed creative solutions to challenges related to interior hardware, plumbing fixtures and toilet accessories. Great care has been taken to ensure the appropriate balance between security, freedom, comfort, and appearance.

The new building is the result of the successful combined effort of an integrated project team. In addition to RBSD Architects, the team for this project includes ARCHITECTURE +/Lomonaco & Pitts Architects, P.C., for behavioral health planning consulting; The Thornton Tomasetti Group for structural engineering; Syska Hennessy Group for mechanical engineering; Lakhani & Jordan Engineers, P.C., for electrical engineering; MDM PC, Consulting Engineers for data, security, and steam distribution; Mathews Nielsen for landscape architecture; Yu & Associates, Inc., for civil engineering; Langan Engineering & Environmental Services, P.C., for survey, geotechnical and environmental engineering; VJ Associates for cost consulting; and Medical Equipment Resources for furniture and equipment planning.



Day Rooms on the sunny south side of the building.

DESIGN:
RBSD Architects

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT:
TDX Construction Company

PROJECT MANAGEMENT:
DASNY
Gary Guttman, Project Manager

KINGS COUNTY PROJECT TEAM:
Warren Hansen, DED, Project Exec

COST:
\$153 million