

SWISSLOG CASE STUDY

COLUMBUS REGIONAL HOSPITAL (CRH)



Columbus Regional Hospital Rebounds from Natural Disaster

Walk through the doors of Columbus Regional Hospital (CRH) today and you would never know that a flood devastated the Indiana hospital causing more than \$180 million in damages. A Thomson Reuters® 'Top 100 Hospitals: National Benchmark,' and major employer in Columbus, IN, the hospital that serves thousands of patients each year was forced to close due to extensive flood damage. The staff, community and a host of partners including Swisslog helped restore operation at CRH in less than a year after it was flooded by heavy spring rain.

On June 7, 2008, after several days of heavy rain, over 10 inches of rain fell in a matter of hours causing a small creek near CRH to overflow. It took just 45 minutes for the overflowing creek to flood the hospital basement and leave the first floor under eight inches of water. Everything that kept the hospital operational including the laboratory, pharmacy, pneumatic tube system, electrical, air handlers and much more were destroyed. Concerned for the safety of their patients, the staff quickly relocated the patients to nearby hospitals to receive the care they needed. Providing emergency services was a top priority of the hospital as well. In late June, a mobile emergency unit was setup on site to provide emergency care for local residents while the hospital was under construction. The Emergency Department was re-opened for use in early August 2008.

Clean Up

Clean up began almost immediately. Hospital administrators wanted to ensure job security for all employees. Surgical teams, doctors and nurses were able to work in the neighboring hospitals and continue providing care for their patients. Other employees were assigned various duties including cleaning and restoring furniture and equipment that could be saved. They worked diligently for six weeks until the contractor had to take over.

The general contractor, McCarthy, who had been obtained for a previously planned expansion was able to work with the hospital on repairing the extensively damaged facility. More than 50% of their total square footage was lost in the flood which meant that everything from the dry wall to the tube system had to be replaced.



CRH officially reopened to the public on October 27, 2008, just shy of five months after the flood, but there was a lot of work remaining. The hospital still needed a new pharmacy and laboratory as well as a replacement tube system. Veronica (Roni) Kagley, Facilities Technology Coordinator, worked with Swisslog Sales Consultant Erik Oberle to get their pneumatic tube system restored.

While the pneumatic tube system was being installed 13 individuals from various departments formed a human tube system and were managed by Kagley. These 13 employees literally did the job that the tube system had previously done. Each member of the human tube system walked an average of nine miles and many flights of stairs every day to transport materials between all areas of the hospital.

In late November 2008, tube system Zone 1, which serves the patient tower was restored but much of the hospital was still under construction. By January, the system was completely restored including Zone 2 and six new stations and was ready to become fully operational once the pharmacy and lab were completed.

“Working with Erik and the entire Swisslog team was a very positive experience.”

– Veronica (Roni) Kagley

On April 21, 2009, the TransLogic pneumatic tube system became fully operational. The tube system covers the hospital from one end to the other and is primarily used for the delivery of medications, lab specimens and paperwork, between nursing stations and the lab or pharmacy.

“Erik was instrumental in assessing our needs and re-establishing our system,” Kagley said, “Working with Erik and the entire Swisslog team was a very positive experience.”

Today the damage from the flood cannot be seen at the hospital, but all of the staff at CRH will not soon forget it. Recently voted one of “The Best Places to Work” for the fourth year in a row, CRH is back to providing top quality patient care with more appreciation of its staff, community and the hospital than ever.

This June under sunny skies, a ceremony marking the first anniversary of the flood was held at the hospital in recognition of the triumphant return of their facility.