



CERTIFICATION CASE STUDY



COMPANY:

Crothall Healthcare

HEADQUARTERS:

Wayne, PA

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

18,000



Crothall Healthcare Leads the Industry Into CIMS Certification

Crothall Healthcare, a healthcare support services company headquartered in Wayne, PA, has long believed that its customer service standards and practices are unrivaled. Yet, any organization can claim it is a leader within its industry and market. Crothall recognized that achieving independent, third-party validation of its operations and service would help it stand apart from the competition. The company turned to ISSA and its Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) to put Crothall's practices to the industry test.

"We have the strongest program and standardized procedures in healthcare," says Tim Polizzi, marketing director for Crothall. "But without a seal of approval, it's your word against your competitor's."

In January 2009, Crothall received the cleaning industry's "seal of approval," earning CIMS Certification with Honors, and became the first healthcare service provider to achieve the designation. Two years later, Crothall's went through a reassessment to ensure continued compliance, to see how the organization's continuous improvement efforts have taken it to the next level, and, most importantly, to add the CIMS-Green Building (GB) designation. Including a comprehensive review of behind-the-scenes information, as well as on-site audits of a broad cross-section of Crothall client hospital facilities, the reassessment demonstrated that Crothall continues to live up to the highest standards, resulting in the organization being awarded CIMS recertification and the CIMS-GB designation in May 2011.

Customer Wins

The improvements Crothall have made as a result of the CIMS and CIMS-GB certification process are not just enjoyed by the company; the healthcare facilities Crothall serves have clearly benefited as well. The CIMS assessment and compliance process takes place at individual customer facilities.

Rick Parker, senior director of Professional and Support Services at Rowan Regional Medical Center, a 268-bed, general acute care hospital located between Charlotte and Winston-Salem, NC, certainly has noticed. Impressed with the support and customer care that Crothall has exhibited since it began providing service in February 2009, Parker notes that the Crothall team has truly become part of the Rowan Regional family, something that was not the case with past cleaning service providers.

Rowan's value promise is based on a strong foundation of patient care and exceeding expected service levels, and cleanliness plays a large part. "We set the bar high for management and for our partners," Parker says. "Cleanliness is certainly part of the equation and an important element in the overall attitude and the environment we are trying to create.

"The cleanliness of a facility is immediately noticed by customers and guests," he continues. "You do not feel good when you walk into a dirty facility and you get a sense that they do not care about operations. When you see that a facility is taking care of the details, it shows that they are concerned about other things as well. Cleanliness makes people feel comfortable and provides a good feeling."

Providing effective cleaning, while doing everything possible to lessen the impact on the environment and human health, is the goal of both Rowan Regional and Crothall. Parker notes that implementing a comprehensive green cleaning program was something that both Rowan and Crothall were very interested in, adding another element to the partnership.

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– Tim Polizzi,
Marketing Director, Crothall

BEST TIP FOR COMPANIES THINKING ABOUT CERTIFICATION:

Often a company going through the CIMS program finds that many of its processes are already compliant. So obtaining certification is more about implementation and ensuring consistency throughout operations than completely overhauling the way a company works.

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– Rick Parker
Senior Director of Professional
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Rowan Regional Medical Center



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And implementing such a program was seamless, especially with the CIMS-GB criteria providing a guide. Rowan and Crothall began using green cleaning chemicals and equipment and switched from traditional mops and cloths to microfiber alternatives.

“Going green” has also proven to have bottom-line benefits, even if they are not immediately recognized. “For hospitals, ‘green’ is a little lower on the priority list,” Rich Feczko, Crothall’s director of systems and standards, says. “At the top are supporting superior patient care and maintaining the facility at a high level.” And green cleaning is making a difference in this regard. For example, microfiber tools are not only sustainable, but they can also play an essential role in preventing the spread of infection. Feczko estimates that four years ago, only about 30 Crothall accounts were using microfiber tools, while today the number is over 150.

Feczko believes that any healthcare organization will find ways to improve its operations through CIMS, a belief that Parker appreciates. “We are very proud of our strong infection control and prevention department and the fact that we have one of the lowest MRSA rates in the nation,” he notes. “Green cleaning and CIMS-GB touches people.”

Proving It

Parker and his team at Rowan Regional are also very appreciative of Crothall’s efforts and willingness to seek third-party validation. “When a third party says that you meet a high, accepted standard, people are more likely to pay attention,” Parker notes. “It takes the claim of excellence beyond being just marketing. Crothall really put itself at risk, and we are impressed that they would be willing to do that.”

Parker adds, “Going through the process demonstrates that Rowan takes on challenges that result in exceptional patient service. We are very proud and so is the entire community.”

Discovery Process

“A lot of what we already had in place was up to the standard,” Polizzi says. “The majority of our processes were compliant with CIMS, so the work was mostly around documentation and creating a formal written policy.”

In many cases, CIMS improved Crothall’s internal systems and protocols, especially in the areas of staffing, training, and safety. The organization created a formal contingency plan for handling temporary labor needs. In the area of security, Feczko discovered an opportunity to develop a written protocol for keys, as employees are expected to handle and keep track of keys often. The CIMS process helped improve safety data as well, and as a result, Crothall now posts safety effectiveness scores at non-unionized hospitals, noting the number of days that have passed without an incident.

“Our customers expect that we do a good job,” Polizzi adds. “I think CIMS gives them peace of mind to know that our processes, systems, and standards are world-class. There’s so much effort that goes in to maintaining that level.”

ABOUT CIMS:

CIMS is the first comprehensive management and operations standard for cleaning organizations. Administered by ISSA and the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences, CIMS is a standard of excellence designed to help building service contractors and in-house service providers develop quality, customer-centered organizations.

The CIMS framework is built around five quality principles that have proven to be the hallmarks of well-managed, successful cleaning operations:

- Quality Systems
- Service Delivery
- Human Resources
- Health, Safety & Environmental Stewardship
- Management Commitment

Why should a company certify to CIMS? Daniel Wagner, director of facility service programs for ISSA, explains: “Implementation of the standard’s elements affords an organization a tremendous opportunity to validate its management systems and processes. Professional, customer-centered cleaning organizations finally have a touchstone resource, a common rallying point around which all members of the industry can gather and work toward achieving an unprecedented level of professionalism and excellence.”