

LEHIGH VALLEY HOSPITAL-CEDAR CREST

# IMPROVING THE PATIENT AND FAMILY EXPERIENCE



**Crothall Healthcare provides vital support services for health care environments across the country, setting the standard for improving patient experience and satisfaction.** Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest, a 981-bed comprehensive care center, is the largest hospital in the city of Allentown, Pa., and the surrounding region which is home to more than 500,000 people. The facility's emergency department (ED) includes a

Level 1 Trauma Center seeing an average of 90,000 patients per year. Crothall units partnered up and joined with Lehigh Valley Health Network's patient experience team to enhance the hospital's ED environments.

**Environmental service staff members are versatile individuals** with a variety of responsibilities, while the new Crothall program at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest focused on specializing and focusing skills in one position. The concept of an emergency room concierge grew from the idea of a point of contact between hospital services and visitors. Now, the right personality drives the position, and the whole environment feels the positive difference.

**"We routinely receive compliments about the concierge and what an asset she is to the emergency team,"** said Laura Harner, Director of Patient Experience for Lehigh Valley Health Network. "This human touch has increased our patient satisfaction scores by increasing the comfort of our waiting area and providing dedicated staff to make patients and visitors more comfortable while they wait."



BY THE NUMBERS

INCREASE IN  
PRESS GANEY  
PERCENTILE  
RANKINGS  
FROM 2018  
TO 2019



Overall Rating  
ER Care



Comfort of  
Waiting Area

## BY THE NUMBERS

INCREASE IN  
PRESS GANEY  
PERCENTILE  
RANKINGS FROM  
2018 TO 2019



Courtesy Shown  
to Family/Friends



Staff Cared About  
You as a Person



Cleanliness  
of ER/ED



Likelihood or  
Recommending

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## KNOWING A CLIENT'S NEED

**A positive patient experience is one of the hospital's top goals.** Lehigh Valley Hospital's leadership were seeking innovative solutions to increase patient satisfaction in the ED. "When I heard about this effort, I approached the president of the hospital and told him Crothall had the resources to make it happen," said Thad Vavrock, Crothall Resident Regional Director of Operations.

**Collaboration was the key to figuring out a solution.** Through a collaboration between Crothall's onsite operations team and patient experience divisions, a program to directly address patients' and visitors' needs was developed with the hospital's own guest services leadership. The team moved forward by establishing a single point of contact for patient and visitor requests: a concierge.

## THE BEST THING FOR CLINICIANS AND PATIENTS

**The concierge helps clinical personnel stay on license.** Wayfinding was becoming a challenge for clinical resources, as doctors and nurses had to stop clinical tasks to help provide directions to people. Nurses were especially targeted for patient and visitor questions while their time was some of the most valuable to clinical care.

**The solution was based on the right personality.** Crothall managers focused on recruiting candidates for a concierge program from within. One goal was finding someone with a strong emotional constitution, and a candidate from Crothall's housekeeping staff in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) quickly rose to the top.

**"The nurses especially get big benefits,** just from the stress of the waiting room being removed," Melissa Williams, Crothall Regional Director of Patient Experience at Lehigh Valley Hospital. "Within a month of Crothall bringing in the concierge program, nurses were saying they had no idea how they had functioned without it."

## MEASURING ITS OWN IMPACT

**The patient experience team tracked needs and the response to them.** The innovations connected to the concierge program included a tracking form, which quantifies services rendered and supplies used. This began as a vital part of budgeting and planning, as Crothall was responsible for sundries such as coloring books for children and magazines for adults.

**"Updates on wait time, some time with a phone charger, even a clean chair ends up mattering,"** said Williams. "Our concierge is the perfect personality to keep people feeling positive beyond fulfilling that important need."

**Results that were obvious in the ED became apparent in the numbers.** The concierge helped with wayfinding, the greatest responsibility by priority and volume, more than 200 times per week within three months of the program's reintroduction. The ED staff were happy to see that key needs for patients and their supporters were being met.

## WAYFINDING INTO THE FUTURE

**The concierge acts as a two-way street.** Patients and visitors conveyed vital information about their experiences to the concierge, which helps develop the best possible environment for the future. "Someone mentioned there was no lactation room in the ED waiting area," said Dan Hogan, Crothall Vice President of Operations. "That idea went to the hospital, which is now planning to install one."

**The right personality brings a human face to expansion.** The concierge's innate skills to connect with patients and their families comes with an ability to relate to clinical staff and other hospital personnel. Lehigh Valley Hospital is considering a plan to expand its ED by a capacity of 100 or more, and an expanded Crothall concierge staff may be an essential part of its success.