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Media Contact: Stephanie Gogots, Hammes Company, sgogots@hammesco.com, 262-792-5900

Three Steps for Developing a System-wide Access Strategy

HOUSTON, TEXAS, June 22, 2017 – Hammes, the nation’s leading developer(hammesco.com) and healthcare strategists across the nation address powerful trends driving rapid evolution in the healthcare industry.

“As the nation’s leading healthcare facilities development company, Hammes is focused on identifying ways to implement master planning, facility designs and construction strategies that uniquely improve facility efficiency and help healthcare providers improve patient care,” said Chris Kay, president and chief operating officer of Hammes. “With more than 70 million baby boomers in the United States, there’s an unquestionable shift in the paradigm for healthcare construction to accommodate their needs for access and care.”

Hammes worked with several industry experts to outline an approach to healthcare access strategy that connects patients to the right care in the right setting at the right cost. The expert panel has identified three imperative steps for developing a system-wide access strategy.

Understand the Patient Journey

Key to a comprehensive strategy is a clear understanding of the patient journey and an evaluation of individual processes around which delivery methods can be designed. With patient convenience paramount, every touch point must consider how quickly and easily patients receive services and provide consumers with affordable alternatives.

“Access strategy is about creating a network that is tailored to the individual, and patients follow the path of least resistance,” notes Dooley. “Once you introduce any level of hassle, they are gone.”

“The strategy must also utilize more valuable data, including advanced predictive analytics, to analyze markets, understand patient choices, and design total networks that optimize patient access at the neighborhood level,” adds Holloway.

Create Access Points Around Emerging Patient Needs

Strategists must now think beyond facilities, and access cannot be reduced to bricks and mortar. The clinical network must be designed to optimize patient access across the spectrum, including ambulatory care, strategically sited physician offices, diagnostic centers, surgery centers, retail clinics, and urgent care facilities. Optimizing patient access does not necessarily require breaking ground on new facilities. Less complex changes such as extending clinic hours to accommodate working families and streamlining lab process to enable the rapid delivery of test results can greatly improve access.

“Leading health systems are accommodating patient preferences regarding how they make appointments, where they receive services, and which channels they use to communicate with caregivers,” observes Sullivan.

A strong digital platform further enhances patient engagement, whether through telehealth capabilities, apps for managing chronic conditions, or an online portal for health services management. Care coordination across the continuum of access points is the key to optimizing the goals of treatment and care.

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Design Sustainable Economic Viability
Modern design strategies must look at cost control and cost effectiveness from both short- and long-term perspectives to ensure facilities can adapt and change to evolving processes and care methodologies over time. Cost-control strategies must also meld creativity and flexibility to divide care and treatment spaces in ways that optimize utilization, workflow, and patient care.

Costs can be controlled by rethinking the who, what, where, when and how aspects of space usage as Americans become more tied to at-your-fingertips access, as research and new technologies yield new care and treatment options, and as changes in consumer behavior and technological advances lead to underutilized facilities. One promising cost control solution rooted in creativity and flexibility is virtual health, which can reduce the need for clinical space and repurpose underutilized buildings.

For patient access to be optimized, the entire system must work together to provide patients with the right care in the most convenient settings in the most cost-efficient manners. Healthcare leaders must establish internal systems for orchestrating goals and success metrics and explore options for selectively partnering with outside organizations. Creativity through flexible partnering is paving the way for a social process of engagement with all participants — patients, providers, and payers.

New Vision + New Tools
The expert panel concluded that in today’s rapidly changing healthcare environment, facility development strategy must look beyond the master plan. Healthcare leaders must focus on access strategy: a new approach to development that brings together facility planning, financial management, and healthcare strategy. The key to creating a strong healthcare access strategy is leveraging new tools that help visualize gaps in service and pursue new opportunities for delivering high-value patient care.

A white paper developed by the panel can be accessed on Hammes’ website at www.hammesco.com.

Members of the expert panel include Meta Dooley, senior vice president of strategy development at Catholic Health Initiatives; Jeff Kraut, executive vice president of strategy and analytics at Northwell Health; John Pierro, chief operating officer at Steward Health Care; Holly Sullivan, director of strategic partnerships at Spectrum Health; and Rex Holloway, regional vice president of Hammes Company.

About Hammes
Hammes is the nation’s leading healthcare facilities development company. The company’s accomplished professionals have deep industry and functional expertise in strategic and capital planning, project management, and real estate development exclusively in the healthcare sector. Hammes helps many of the nation’s leading healthcare organizations plan, implement, and manage capital and facility strategies and solutions. The company delivers measurable results that help healthcare providers grow while meeting the unique health and wellness needs of their communities. Hammes is headquartered in Brookfield, Wisconsin, and provides services through a network of regional offices strategically located across the country. The company’s full range of strategic planning and facility development capabilities is reflected in its ranking by Modern Healthcare as the No. 1 Healthcare Facility Developer in 16 of the last 19 years.

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