



No better time for modular construction in healthcare

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When thinking modular construction for healthcare projects, don't think "plug-in" MRI units, operating suites on the back of a tractor trailer, or temporary make-shift facilities. The idea of modular construction is now far beyond the basics and should be more integral to current solutions for healthcare building programs. By streamlining the construction of hospitals through the use of modular planning, design, manufacturing, and construction, you can recognize how far-reaching (savings to budget—overall development costs, schedule, efficiencies, safety, etc.) the methodology of modular construction can be incorporated into a project.

So what is modular construction? It is a building methodology whereby elements of a project are mass produced and assembled to make larger finished products. An entire project can be based on modularity—think beyond just the modular patient room. Like sustainable projects, make modular a core value of the project, not just an element that can be dropped from the program. Identify as many project components as possible including programmatic elements of patient rooms, Operating Rooms, Emergency Departments, exam and treatment rooms, nurses' stations, bathrooms, pharmacy and laboratories, and building elements such as structure, exterior envelope, and MEP systems (headwalls, bathroom wet walls, and overhead piping and ductwork). With the increased integration of BIM in the development of projects, incorporating modular building components becomes easier and more desirable.

Realized benefits of incorporating the modular mindset will include; increased quality control, speed to market (shorten schedule via parallel or concurrent construction activities and prebuilding off-site in a warehouse environment), enhanced communication, improved safety, efficiency, reduced construction waste/debris, reduce exposure to risk, and increased predictability of project outcomes. Added benefits include cleaner facilities (infection control) and budget savings (first cost and life-cycle).

The current modular construction delivery model does not yield the perceived modular building; rather it is all about efficiency and predicted outcomes while not sacrificing design or programmatic intent. As we traverse through the current economic period, modular construction can be an extremely viable delivery model.

