



Lower Operating Costs with a Building Space Analysis inefficiencies can kill your bottom line

With the economy struggling to get back on its feet, many long-term care and senior living providers are looking for innovative opportunities that will not only help them survive in the short-term, but improve their industry position over the long term.



Lower Your Operating Costs with a Building Space Analysis

The Question and Answer

You may ask: "How is this possible without expending large amounts of capital resources we don't have?"

The simple answer is to better utilize what you do have to take advantage of cost efficiencies and reconfigure your facilities, bringing them in line with what the market demands. As architects and planners, we have seen it time and again: facilities designed and built in the '60s, '70s and '80s use space inefficiently. While the original design was efficient when it was constructed, it has been adjusted over the years, either for new programs and approaches or in a "space grab" by existing programs. The result is that the facility costs more to operate and seems less attractive to residents and their families.

Now What?

So how can an architect or planner make you leaner to survive today's economic conditions? We start by analyzing all existing spaces within your facility. We look at size and location of space and compare them to the standards and approaches of today. Inevitably, we find space that is oversized for its current function. We also find that certain spaces are in the wrong location for efficient operation.

For example, centralized dining was designed for efficient use by dietary staff, but this approach didn't account for the time and effort required to get all residents to the centralized dining room at once. This is a major drain of resources that occurs three times per day, every day. De-centralizing the dining function enables the staff to spend less time assembling residents. When a dining room is closer to living quarters, residents are more able to find their own way there. Staggering mealtimes allows dietary staff to transport food to these decentralized dining areas, creating operational savings.

New Approaches Make a Facility More Inviting

After reviewing the size and location of spaces and discovering excess space, we can turn our attention to new approaches that will make your facility more alluring to residents and their families. This may include other care options, such as rehabilitation areas, assisted care or hospice.

Along with a space analysis, we typically recommend a review of the existing building envelope and systems because many energy efficient materials and systems have been developed since these facilities were built. Substantial savings are possible by replacing heating/cooling systems, insulation, windows and doors. The metrics our clients have experienced include:

- Improved energy efficiency from 16% to 31%
- Increased productivity, which created a 3% reduction in labor expenses
- Increased revenue from 18% to 46%
- Resident and family satisfaction increased by 25%

The first step to achieving these savings is to have an experienced long-term care planner or architect complete a space analysis. This will identify areas of inefficiency in your existing building. A more efficient layout can then be developed along with an operational and financial proforma to outline the approach that yields the greatest savings.



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Kim is a partner of the firm and highly involved in PRA's long-term care studio. If you would like to learn more about the transformational changes occurring in long-term care facility planning and design, please contact Kim.