

Healthcare Design and Facility Planning: Key Considerations When Expanding to Angioplasty

By Amy Newell

In many areas of the country, diagnostic-only cardiac programs are beginning to evaluate the need to offer coronary interventions in order to keep pace with not only the competitive landscape of cardiac care, but also the current treatment standards. Cath Labs not equipped to perform interventions might cause volumes to be lost to programs that provide advanced procedures; thus, to 'stay in the game', it is essential to ensure your program is best positioned for growth.

Corazon believes that programs must always be forward-thinking and prepared to make change, as Certificate of Need laws sunset, regulations change, and professional societies publish new practice guidelines. As a result, to provide more comprehensive cardiovascular services and increased access to lifesaving treatment, more and more community hospitals are implementing angioplasty programs in conjunction with a tertiary provider of open heart surgery.

In Corazon's experience across the country, the development of angioplasty (PCI) programs is not always easy. Oftentimes, older facilities need to be replaced with newer structures and imaging equipment that better accommodate and ensure high-quality and efficient cardiac care delivery that meet or exceed the demands of new, cutting-edge practice. Many hospitals need to build, update, or outfit space in order to offer expanded services, which can be a resource-intensive, costly, and unfamiliar effort. Corazon advocates a clear **facility strategy** to ensure optimal design, which can increase efficiencies, create a competitive advantage, and provide state-of-the-art care to a growing patient base. Since few hospitals will have the funding or other resources to design and build a new facility from the ground-up, most will need to renovate existing space to accommodate the equipment and technology required for coronary intervention.

Regardless of your current situation, **Corazon recommends focused attention to these Design Considerations when expanding your facility to offer angioplasty:**

Visibility & Access: External access for patients, family, EMS and Flight providers, and physicians should remain a primary focus throughout the design phase to showcase the new or expanded program. Prominent placement of logos on the building and having a dedicated entrance to the cardiac program can facilitate a streamlined approach to the care and treatment for patients across the continuum. Indeed, having a clear route to the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory (CCL) will increase access for patients in need of lifesaving therapies. Wayfinding to direct individuals to the appropriate area can be accomplished through signage, the color of décor, staff uniforms, and other means of visibly showcasing the cardiac area as distinct from other hospital areas.

Adjacencies: With new construction, it is sometimes easier to link ancillary departments into CCL schematics, but this is not necessarily true with renovation. Adjacencies between the cardiac areas and other departments such as the pharmacy and ER can aide patient throughput both clinically and operationally. If these departments cannot be moved through renovation, then other alternatives, perhaps a pneumatic tube system or medication dispensing system, should be considered. Other clinical adjacencies are equally important. Keeping related services as part of a virtual

"Cardiovascular Center" may at times be challenging, but can provide a win-win for patients, families, staff, clinical managers, and physicians.

Technology: As always, integrating the latest and greatest technology into a facility can be costly and time consuming. Whether building a new facility or renovating an existing one for expansion to angioplasty, the best option for the services to be offered should be based on both space and budget allocation. Many of today's latest cardiovascular technologies can assist with expediting patient throughput and optimizing excellence in care delivery. Point of Care testing, remote access for physicians, electronic test results, and digital/flat panel equipment are all options to consider.

Patient-Focused Care – With increasing evidence about the benefits of patient-centric care delivery models, hospitals across the country are creating 'healing environments', which offer less-severe atmospheres to reduce patient stress and facilitate faster healing and wellness. Unit design (soft rounded corners, soothing wood tones, colorful artwork), access to natural sunlight and outdoor views, private "universal" rooms, and decentralized nursing stations all contribute to this concept. Many recent studies have focused on these key elements of Evidence-Based Design, proving that facility layout can indeed positively affect patient outcomes. Optimal design can result in increased patient safety, staff and physician efficiencies, and a better patient experience overall due to family inclusion in the healing process.

Corazon believes that Angioplasty services will continue to grow and remain a strategic decision for many hospitals; though expanding a cardiac service line to include coronary intervention is very complex. Many facility factors need to be considered not only with new construction, but renovations to an existing cardiac program to accommodate expanded service offerings.

With PCI considered the standard-of-care for heart attack, facilities must strategize about how to best offer this service, and enter a market that holds great promise for non-surgical cardiac centers. Designing a facility that can not only accommodate the new technology and equipment necessary to perform interventions from the start, but also grow and flex with the dynamics of our changing cardiovascular industry, will best position a newly-expanded program for future success.

Call Corazon today to learn more about a **revolutionary e-consulting product** designed to lead a hospital through all the necessary steps involved in creating a successful full-service angioplasty program...This web-based application, **Corazon Essentials Online**, will take you step-by-step through the processes for offering PCI, from program development, through state requirements, to start-up.



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