



Gaylord Specialty Healthcare Case Study

At a time when supply chain delays and material shortages have only wreaked havoc for construction and development teams working hard to hit project deadlines, coming in ahead of schedule seems like something owners can only dream about. But thanks to quick problem solving and collaboration, it became a reality for Gaylord Specialty Healthcare's newly renovated space on 8 Devine Street in North Haven. But that was not the only way the Wohlsen team earned the trust of the owner during construction. In fact, it took less than two weeks for that to happen.

When Gaylord Specialty Healthcare was ready to transform an outdated space into a new, state-of-the-art healthcare facility, they brought in Wohlsen Construction as the general contractor to make it happen. The \$1.3 million renovation involved approximately 12,000 square feet of neurology and orthopedic rehabilitation areas. The project was broken into two separate phases because when construction started in October 2021, patient care couldn't stop — the facility still had to be occupied and operational.

During the first phase, half of the facility was closed off to maintain business as usual, while an old basketball court in the facility was demolished to build out several clinical offices, therapy rooms, a neuro gym space, and bathrooms for the staff and clients. Phase Two started with Gaylord staff moving over to the newly completed area. At the same time, construction teams began building a brand new, high-end reception and waiting area and an orthopedic gym complete with high-tech ZeroG and Amico lift systems.

Strengthening the Pillars of Trust — Literally

In order to keep business running as usual, the HVAC system also had to run — especially heading into the winter months.

"We were replacing all the outdated rooftop units with a brand-new system," Mike Courtney, Senior Project Manager, explained. "But the long lead times in purchasing these units required us to provide temporary heating and cooling solutions until they arrived — even into occupancy. A lot of effort was needed to ensure we had the equipment we needed and could get it installed without any gaps in operation."





But when the team found a structural issue that would prevent the rooftop units from being supported almost immediately, it required a major change in the plans right off the bat.

“We were planning to install a 20-ton and two 7.5-ton rooftop units to support the entire space, which the current structure just could not hold,” Mike added. “We were able to procure a steel vendor to price and fabricate it quickly, complete the shop drawings, and install the structural steel before commencing MEP work within two weeks. We made sure a major change did not impact the project’s progress. As a result, the client knew we were a team they could trust to not only address issues but find quick solutions, versus putting it all on the architects and engineers.”

While it did not take long for Wohlsen to prove themselves as an invaluable construction partner, they did have a few more opportunities to prove it — like upon discovering that the underground sanitary system was not actually located where the existing blueprints stated.

“This curveball required a lot more excavating than initially planned and major rerouting of the underground plumbing,” Mike shared. “We were able to resolve it in the field ourselves, so there were no cost impacts for the client, and our schedule stayed on track.”

“We were able to resolve it in the field ourselves, so there were no cost impacts for the client and our schedule stayed on track”

Strong Collaboration Built on Common Ground

Teamwork came through on many occasions too, especially when the VAVs (variable air volume systems) experienced significant shipping delays during phase one of construction.

“Throughout the project, everyone was very committed to resolving issues amongst ourselves and coming through for the owner, which is not always the case,” Mike added. “Instead of letting this issue set us back, all parties contributed financially to expedite the shipment of the VAVs to prevent any delays. This support from all teams was critical to getting ahead of schedule and pushing forward. In addition, we were able to install all our ductwork early on so that once the VAV’s arrived, we would be able to close the ceilings quickly.”

This commitment to meeting the schedule could not be more important in terms of minimizing disruption and risks when working in an occupied setting. In this case, that applied not only to Gaylord professionals and patients but also to their neighbors.

“A sleep center occupied the other side of the building, so we not only had to maintain an enclosed space internally, but we also had to be mindful of things like construction noise and staging fire alarm testing during work hours for everyone in the building,” Mike said. “That also meant coordinating the installation of various units and equipment during off hours.”

There were also several value engineering ideas that Wohlsen proposed to the tenant along the way that helped with the efficiency and costs of the project. “We recommended changing the structure of the secondary overhead ceiling and the spec of the ceiling tiles, as well as keeping the existing storefront curtain wall entrance. All of these costs were given back to the owner as credits, which they very much appreciated,” Mike noted.

With the original plan for phase one to wrap up in February, pulling off a pre-holiday completion was a major benefit to the client. Not only were they a few months ahead of schedule, pulling the entire project to an earlier completion, but the Gaylord staff were also able to use the holiday break to get moved out of the existing space into the new one for phase two.

“We were very committed to pushing and tracking the materials to make sure we could satisfy our schedule. Our team worked closely with the design team e4H Architecture, Centek Engineering, and the owner to provide alternative materials whenever necessary, so we could keep moving forward. It was truly a team effort. As a result, our wins throughout this project helped us turn Healthcare Trust of America and Gaylord Healthcare into raving fans, which matters most to us.”

