

Medical College of Georgia Health System, Augusta, GA

Crothall does far more than wash, dry, and deliver linens. Its utilization and education programs raise quality while driving down costs. As Customer Service Manager for Crothall's multi-million pound laundry processing plant in Augusta, GA, Miriam Josey spends nearly 85% of her time on the road, visiting over 70 customer locations. During her 13 year career, she has impacted countless patients and budgets.

At Augusta's prestigious Medical College of Georgia Health System, a Crothall customer since 2002, Miriam has spent years directing the company's laundry and linen management program. Linen users at the campus respect her for the way she has saved money and raised quality. Says Director of Materials Management, Andy Anderson, "Crothall responds quickly to customer needs and wants, and improves satisfaction. Together, we achieved reduced operating costs, enhanced and new services, and an ongoing linen management program. I would recommend them."

For example, Miriam has reduced MCG scrub losses by 60%, saving nearly \$60,000 annually. She even sponsored a "scrub amnesty," during which hospital staff were encouraged to return truant scrub wear, no questions asked. The amnesty saved MCG over \$1,800 in expense. Miriam's suggestion to bag fitted sheets rather than folding them saved the hospital another \$2,000 annually.

Then as part of Crothall's Linen Awareness Program, she challenged departments to reduce consumption through a hospital-wide competition. The winning MRI unit reduced their use by 47%, even as activity increased, saving nearly \$2,500 annually. And in yet another innovative initiative, this time in collaboration with the Pediatric nursing staff, she eliminated expensive, pre-made linen packs for visiting parents, cutting waste and costs by \$37,000 annually. Simple but effective measures such as these have raised linen availability while cutting costs. Overall linen usage is now 19 pounds per adjusted patient day, extremely efficient for a large teaching hospital.

Miriam sketches out the key components of Crothall's successful systems:

Linen User Committees

"We strongly encourage the formation of a linen user committee at each site, representing a cross section of user departments. We design and standardize linen use protocols and review consumption and utilization data. It's a critical forum for introducing change and gaining the needed support to facilitate action. We rely heavily on the Committee's support for the cost-saving initiatives Crothall implements."

Protocols

"Most procedural changes are low cost (or no-cost), common-sense solutions. For example, when we find piles of unused linen in discharge rooms, we have to re-wash them.



❖ Miriam Josey at work.

Less Is More: Smart Linen Utilization





❖ (from left to right): MCG Director of Materials Management Andy Anderson, Crothall Manager Katina Burke, Miriam Josey, and Crothall Laundry Services General Manager Bob Roy

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Hospitals can save when nursing personnel are careful to only take what they need into the patient room. Placing dedicated ‘rewash’ hampers in strategic locations can also help segregate out those stained linens for the more vigorous cleaning they need to meet standards.”

Education

“You have to take the message directly to the users, face-to-face. Once they understand the reason for a new procedure, users respond positively. People want to do what they can to stop the waste.”

Surveillance & Feedback

“After the training, I am back out there checking on compliance. We are continuously rounding, verifying, coaching, and troubleshooting. Visibility is essential. I continue to follow up until both our laundry operators and users are satisfied that the solution is permanently in place.”

Tracking/Reporting

“Every possible indicator—productivity, quality, fill-rates, customer satisfaction, and linen utilization statistics—are tracked and graphed. Sharing the data

allows us to collaborate on action plans designed to meet goals. Staff members appreciate the feedback and want to track their ongoing performance and costs.”

Responsiveness

“When clients need something—they need it now. Fortunately there’s a sense of urgency infused into the culture at Crothall. So if we haven’t already anticipated the need, we move very quickly when we become aware of it.”

Customers at MCG, as well as the other client hospitals served by Crothall’s Augusta facility, appreciate this personal touch. Says client Bobbie Brantley of Jefferson Hospital in Louisville, Georgia, “The personnel is a plus. They go the last mile to please. We’ve needed items at the last minute and they would get in their own vehicles and deliver them to us.” Over at Emanuel Medical Center, in Swainsboro, Georgia, customer Robbie Bell is equally complimentary: “Miriam Josey has been great to work with, and she always goes the extra mile to make sure that her customers are taken care of. I would highly recommend Crothall to anyone.”