

## UAB Health System Birmingham, AL

## Baptist Health System Birmingham, AL

### UAB Health System

Birmingham, Alabama is an area served by some of the nation's top hospitals, including UAB Health System and Baptist Health System. Both have turned to Crothall Laundry Services to keep pace with their unique laundry and linen distribution demands. These two health systems, served out of the same Crothall linen distribution center, highlight how Crothall uses its expertise as one of the nation's largest health care laundry processors to deliver excellent service and creative strategies, at substantial cost savings.

The multi-facility UAB Health System is affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and includes the 900-bed flagship UAB Hospital. In 1998, the bulk delivery and internal handling of linen was not meeting the needs and expectations of the patient care staff. Looking for innovative change, UAB administration turned to the expertise of Crothall Laundry Services.

A team of Crothall operations specialists spent considerable time at the UAB Health System complex learning, listening, diagnosing, and forming solutions to address improvement opportunities. "Our first priority," recalls Michael Bailey, Senior Vice President, Crothall Laundry Services, "was to streamline the clean linen delivery and soiled linen collection process. This function was simply not getting carried out consistently on a daily basis."

### Creative Solutions Yield Satisfying Outcomes

Crothall's solution created numerous benefits for UAB. "Within 30 days, we established and staffed a linen distribution center in Birmingham. From this location, we provided a 'full service' program, managing and providing every aspect of the service: linen replacement, clean linen receiving, sorting, clean delivery to the hospital's individual units, and soiled pick-up," shares Bailey. "Once we moved the operation off-site and began making deliveries after hours, we freed up a significant amount of elevator and Rapistan time, which had a significant impact on improving overall supply delivery."

Crothall's full service program resulted in cost savings of over \$500,000 annually, and most importantly solved the linen delivery/collection problem that had plagued UAB. Patient care units could now count on consistent, dependable, on-time linen service.

# CROTHALL LAUNDRY SERVICES

## DIVES INTO CREATIVE SERVICE AND COST SAVING SOLUTIONS

❖ UAB Health System's 900-bed flagship UAB Hospital



❖ Citizens Baptist Hospital - Recently implemented a full service Crothall linen program

Celebrating  
15 Years  
**Crothall**  
Services Group

A Member of the Compass Group



**“We knew we needed a service provider that could offer better service and quality. Crothall was the best equipped to handle our needs.”**



❖ Baptist Health System Director of Clinical Resources, Brandie Hahn

Another important program introduced by Crothall has been the Joint Review Committee (JRC) meetings, which provide an opportunity for Crothall to meet with nurse managers and department heads to implement linen utilization policies and protocols, changes in linen items, and to provide overall monitoring of laundry costs. This forum has directly helped cut linen costs in the first year by \$200,000. Additionally, linen costs are now allocated to each hospital unit, limiting waste, reducing usage, and allowing for cost accountability. As a result, linen usage has dropped from 28 pounds per patient day when Crothall started, to an average of 16.2 today.

Other areas of concern have been addressed as well. UAB administrators suspected linen being discarded in the waste stream was potentially a large problem. Crothall's solution was to appoint a “dumpster diver” who sorts through the hospital's waste to find discarded linen. In 2005, the recovery program turned up over \$171 of linen per hour in the waste. Annualized, this equates to approximately \$1.5 million of linen literally being thrown away.

In response, Crothall has initiated “in-service” educational programs to teach the hospital's employees that no matter how soiled a piece of linen, it can still be salvaged and cleaned. This is exactly the type of expertise that is gained by partnering with an industry leader such as Crothall.

Bob Jones, UAB Manager of Support Services, states his feelings clearly: “The most important factor in evaluating a linen provider is quality and attention to patient needs. The second is partnership – bringing in outside

expertise to come up with effective solutions. This is why our relationship with Crothall has been so successful.” And this is why virtually all linen complaints have been eliminated, and service satisfaction scores are now consistently in the 90s.

#### **Baptist Health System**

More recently, Crothall has begun serving the hospitals of Baptist Health System. This system consists of multiple facilities spread in and around Birmingham, Alabama. BHS had operated an on-site laundry, but the high operating costs and need for replacement equipment convinced them that capital dollars would be better spent on hospital equipment than on laundry service, which could be outsourced. When the hospital decided to evaluate the market for alternative laundry providers, BHS's System Director of Clinical Resources, Brandie Hahn, participated in the process, and determined, “We knew we needed a service provider that could offer better service and quality. Crothall was the best equipped to handle our needs.”

Crothall started providing linen distribution to BHS in January 2004, and the pace of service expansion has been vigorous. Recently, BHS has converted Citizens Baptist's linen program to full service, so Crothall is involved in every step of linen distribution.

As reliance on Crothall has increased, linen utilization has begun to come under better control. For 2003/2004, BHS realized over \$550,000 in annual savings due to improvements in utilization alone.

Crothall also co-sponsors “Linen Awareness Days,” in which displays are set up, along with

an information booth to help educate hospital employees about the high costs of linen and teach best practices in an effort to reduce waste. In addition, Crothall holds regular JRC meetings, attended by representatives from each of the BHS facilities.



❖ Crothall Assistant Director Brad Akin, UAB Manager of Support Services Bob Jones, and Crothall Director Freddy Rivas

#### **Partnering with Experts**

Having a dependable partner in Crothall is reassuring to a growing hospital system. When in November 2005, UAB added its brand-new, 9-story North Pavilion facility, Crothall was able to absorb the new volume (a 52% increase in the number of linen carts) without disrupting the regular daily service. With the new Women's and Infant's Hospital opening in 2008, Bob Jones is “100% confident in Crothall's ability to meet its needs.” And BHS has shown its confidence in Crothall by rolling out increased service to more of its facilities. Confidence in partnership is not something Crothall takes for granted. As valued partners such as UAB and BHS adapt to the ever-changing needs of their patients, Crothall's innovative solutions also change and adapt, providing results that everyone can be proud of.