



**Learn more
about our
Tuition
Reimbursement
Program**

HealthCare Review - New England's Leading Healthcare Media Source

July 30, 2008

[Home](#) • [Advertise](#) • [HealthCare Symposiums](#) • [HealthCare Career Board](#) • [Subscribe](#)

Search HCR:

Query/Search engine:

- [About HCR](#)
- [Current Issue #6](#)
- [Career Moves](#)
- [Archived Editions](#)
- [HCR Media Kit](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Education Directory](#)
- [Community Events](#)
- [Tradeshows](#)
- [Linked Sites](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Site Map](#)



Features In Focus

Coming Clean – The Challenge Of Keeping A Nursing Home Sterile

Published Friday, Jul 4, 2008
by Mike Sawchuk

A few years ago, an 80-bed Connecticut nursing home sent their building service contractor (BSC) an ultimatum: either meet the terms of your three-year, \$442,000 contract with our facility or get out.

Meeting with the owners of the cleaning company, the nursing home administrators warned the company that this was its last opportunity to get the job done right. Rooms were not being cleaned to contract specifications and the number of housekeepers on duty varied from day to day, administrators said. “I told them this was absolutely their last chance. If I had to talk to them again, it would be about firing them,” added one of the administrators.

Fortunately, things did improve for this nursing home. A new on-site supervisor was hired along with a number of new housekeepers. The BSC promised to provide more thorough and ongoing training of its workers and conduct monthly inspections of the facility—all in an effort to improve their performance and retain the account. Although it is not known whether the nursing home renewed their contract with this cleaning firm, the administrators did note that, as of this writing, the service has improved, “and in some cases even surpassed expectation,” according to one nursing home attendant.

Nursing Home Issues

In all fairness to the cleaning contractor, nursing homes have very specific cleaning needs and can be very difficult to clean and maintain. Unlike offices or schools, which typically allow the cleaning professionals to do their jobs while occupants are away, nursing homes have people living and working in them 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

Further, these facilities typically rank with day-care centers, schools, and some medical facilities as home to a host of infectious diseases, germs, and bacteria that are rarely encountered in other types of cleaning situations. Worse, because the residents are older, often with weakened immune systems, they are more susceptible to infections and

Picture your Career with Exeter!



Visit our website today!

5 Alumni Drive | Exeter NH 03833



Join our email club!

Register for the HCR E-Newsletter!

Receive an update that a new issue of **HealthCare Review** is available online!

Need CE Credits? Click here!



Have you moved? Click here to give us your new address!

Latest NE News

Sorry... There are no items currently listed.

disease.

Nursing home cleaning crews will also encounter cleaning situations not usually found in other locations. For instance, spills may be more common, as are toileting “accidents,” which must be cleaned up quickly and thoroughly without further embarrassment to the resident. A lot more attention may be required to cleaning “high-touch” areas, such as door handles, light switches, railings, and so forth. And some residents may not perform regular and proper hand washing, making cross contamination a real concern.

For BSCs and nursing home administrators, the best way to handle the cleaning challenges in nursing homes is to have a system—a process that addresses these different cleaning situations as well as the pressing hygiene, sanitation, and environmental issues specific to these locations.

A Nursing Home Cleaning System

The professional industry has developed a variety of cleaning systems such as zone cleaning, specialist cleaning, day cleaning,* and so on. Each of these, and likely a mixture of all three, can be put to use to maintain a nursing home. However, some of the specific components of a nursing home cleaning system include:

Evaluating cleaning needs based on who lives in the facility. Some long-term-care facilities have healthy, active residents who have few special cleaning needs. Others have older or more infirm residents that require special care not only from the facility’s staff but from the cleaning crew as well. For instance, they may have accidents more often or may more frequently spill drinks on floors and carpets.

Clarifying the responsibility of the BSC. Usually, the BSC will clean only common areas, not medical or special care stations. In addition, the analysis must take into consideration such things as how often residents use certain areas; how many residents use the areas; and the types of floor coverings (carpet or hard surface), furniture, and other items that can impact cleaning needs.

Creating the cleaning schedule based on resident needs, traffic patterns, types of soils, and soil loads. A cafeteria floor cannot be mopped and cleaned at breakfast, lunch, or dinner breaks. Instead, other common areas can be serviced during mealtimes. This requires supervisors and the cleaning crew to determine which areas can be cleaned at what times.

Selecting cleaning products and disinfectants that meet cleaning requirements. For instance, ensure that disinfectants have the ‘kill claims’ required by law. Additionally, some chemicals may require a pre-clean first, and then a second cleaning to remove contaminants.

Work loading to use each cleaning worker’s time most effectively. With an effective work loading system in place, cleaning supervisors know approximately how long it takes to perform all cleaning tasks in each area of the facility as well as the number of custodial ... [More]

Send this page to a friend

Send this page to a friend

Copyright © 2008

HealthCare *Review* - Northeast
Network
All rights reserved.

HealthCare *Review* (New
England edition : online)
ISSN 1554-8155

[Home](#) • [Advertise](#) • [HealthCare Symposiums](#) • [HealthCare Career Board](#) •
[Subscribe](#) ↑ [Top](#)

HealthCare *Review*
Millyard Technology Park 20 Technology Way Nashua, NH 03060
Tel: (800) 325-6464 (in New England) or (603) 579-8900 (outside New England)
Fax: (603) 579-8998 hcr@healthcarereview.com
[Privacy Policy](#)

Powered by Jenica
FREEDOM
Web Site Solutions