

A Walk-In Cooler, With a Stainless Twist

Hospital utilizes ActivRAC Stainless Steel storage system to ensure optimum cleanliness



It might seem illogical to think that an infection can be contracted in the sterile environment of a hospital or clinic, but it happens more often than hospitals might like. In fact, according to recent statistics from the American Medical Association, 1 out of every 20 hospitalized patients contract a healthcare-associated infection (HAIs), and an estimated 1.7 million people contracted an HAI in a United States hospital.

In addition to the growing concern hospitals have over HAIs from a patient care perspective, new healthcare reform laws are set to penalize hospitals with the highest rates of HAIs. Beginning in 2015, hospitals with an excessive rate of healthcare-associated infections will be penalized one percent of their Medicare payments. According to data from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, this would result in an average penalty of over \$208,000 per hospital. And, it might not stop at hospitals—chances are home health agencies, ambulatory surgical centers, and skilled nursing facilities might be at risk for penalties as well.

With these new laws, it's no surprise that keeping medical items as clean and sterile as possible is even more of a top priority than before—and as a result, more healthcare facilities are looking to stainless steel storage solutions.

For one award-winning hospital in Virginia, a sterile storage system was needed—but maximizing precious space was also an important priority. When the architecture firm redesigning the hospital's laboratory placed a call to Art Bykonen, an Account Manager with Spacesaver Storage Solutions.

"They reached out with a request for a mobile system within a walk-in cooler, which was being designed as part of a lab renovation," Bykonen said. "After some discussion, the ActivRAC 7M SS (Stainless Steel) system seemed like the best solution in order to prevent the rust and corrosion usually caused by humidity and temperature."



The stainless steel option was also the logical choice for its easy cleaning ability. "Healthcare professionals are used to stainless in laboratories," Bykonen says. "It doesn't promote the spread of infection, and is very easy to clean. It's a huge advantage for any healthcare environment."

Prior to the mobile system, the cooler was outfitted with wire chrome shelving, which is still being used in conjunction with the ActivRAC system. A dual control was installed in the system for access at both ends, and what results is a cooler space that not only ensures an uncontaminated environment, but also a sizeable increase in storage space. A level floor (necessary to roll carts in and out of the space) using Marine Grade plywood (a flooring

which performs well in humid and wet conditions) completed the renovation of the cooler space.

The ActivRAC 7M SS system was just installed in Summer 2014, and Bykonen is looking forward to seeing how the new solution is working out for the laboratory workers that utilize it. "It's a small solution—two carriages, about 18 feet long in total," Bykonen says. "You don't need to have a large installation to have a big impact on storage space."

