

## Experienced CMs Deliver Success



*Hathorne Hill Rehabilitation and Care Center*

by **Anthony Papantonis**



*Anthony Papantonis*

The senior living market is realizing significant growth in many areas of the country and the northeast is no exception. New communities are being developed throughout the region offering a range of services especially in memory care. New developments continue to create pressure on existing communities to renovate and expand their services of care in order to maintain high census levels and remain attractive to the discerning tastes of boomers and their parents. As owners and developers qualify key project team disciplines for future developments, selecting a well-qualified construction management (CM) firm will pay dividends.

Engaging an experienced senior living CM provides significant value to the owner in many ways. For starters, a seasoned CM can provide the design team with budget estimates based on initial preliminary drawings as well as recent senior living project data allowing for better decisions and design adjustments to be made before reaching the construction document level of investment. Better yet, some project teams may decide before any drawings are produced, to collaborate with the contractor to design to a detailed estimate and continuously update the estimate as the design progresses. This Lean project delivery approach provides accurate, early project pricing and reduces the significant costs associated with redesign and schedule delays. A knowledgeable CM can also offer real time constructability feedback during the design process to ensure a smooth transition into the construction phase of a project. Constructability reviews allow the contractor to explore project-specific value optimizing options such as alternative materials, M.E.P. systems and means and methods of construction specific to senior living construction, enabling the project team to evaluate opportunities to enhance project value and minimize risk.

Experienced CMs recognize technical subtleties unique to the industry that can make a big impact to a project's bottom-line. Understanding how to work with certain project financing agencies such as HUD or knowing in advance what regulatory agencies such as DPH or a fire department inspector will look for in a skilled nursing environment requires a certain understanding and finesse in how they ap-

proach and manage these critical relationships throughout a project. By bringing their industry-specific knowledge, resources and relationships to the table, CMs are able to offer innovative alternatives and solutions throughout a project. CMs also have the ability to leverage trade-specific knowledge from their valuable subcontractor and supplier partners who can help identify alternative products, systems and trends. This knowledge allows the CM to work more effectively with architects and designers as they strive to achieve project goals such as sustainability requirements.

Risk management is improved significantly by partnering with a CM that has proven systems and processes in place that ensure critical schedule and budget goals are achieved. For example, the utilization of building information modeling (BIM) to coordinate complex M.E.P. systems can be a major contributor to a project's success by increasing the accuracy of electrical and mechanical system installation.

Projects executed within occupied and operational buildings raise even greater risk to the non-experienced CM. The challenges of maintaining high-level care during construction are numerous however, selecting a CM with a proven track record and training in construction within sensitive environments will ensure a project is executed with precision, safety and professionalism. Maintaining building occupant safety is a top priority achieved by minimizing disruption to base building mechanical and electrical systems, emergency support, fire alarm and resident/staff access and egress.

Implementation of an indoor air-quality management and water infiltration mitigation plan are critical throughout the construction process. Ensuring the most optimal emergency vehicle access possible at all times is critical based on the nature of the business. Minimal disruption to resident/staff routine and their comfort is of utmost importance. An experienced CM will proactively work with the owner and facility administrators to ensure that all precautions have been taken to prevent costly errors such as mitigating dust, vibration and noise to the highest degree possible.

There are, undoubtedly, a host of critical items that senior living developers and owners need to manage successfully throughout the project lifecycle. Selecting a construction manager with proven senior living industry experience is one of the critical steps that will help ensure a project's overall success.

*Anthony Papantonis is President of Nauset Construction Corp. in Needham, Mass.*

## Veitas and Veitas Engineers Begins New Assisted Living Project



*Pinehills project*

Rendering courtesy of TAT

Plymouth, MA – Veitas and Veitas Engineers of Braintree is partnering with The Architectural Team and Callahan Inc. to provide structural design for Laurelwood at the Pinehills in Plymouth. The new 77,000sf, two- and three-story community houses 80 residences offering assisted, independent and memory care living options. A 10,000sf open air parking garage will be housed beneath the left wing of the structure. The project is expected to be completed in Spring 2015.

Veitas and Veitas recently completed structural design for the Golden Pond Assisted Living expansion in Hopkinton. The 35,000sf, four-story addition nearly dou-

bled the facility's size, providing additional housing and common areas for residents. The structural design took advantage of a cost-effective wood frame. Steel girders were used at the second floor to meet the first floor's large open space requirements.

"We have recently seen an increase in the construction and expansion of assisted living communities. Assisted living communities are now featuring hospitality-like elements and we are excited to provide cost-effective, yet innovative structural design solutions for current and future projects," said Rimas Veitas, Principal at Veitas and Veitas Engineers

## Renovating an Operational Assisted Living Facility

**Continued from page 18**

signage to let residents know what is coming. Second, getting the residents and staff used to the idea of a renovation.

One strategy that's particularly effective, and was with this project, is holding a "town meeting" to talk about the renovation and what the residents and staff could expect. This meeting gave the residents the opportunity to meet us and the contractor and to learn firsthand about the renovation.

Following the meeting, well appointed construction signage was ordered that would fit in with the facility décor. Staff and resident counsel received daily updates on progress from us and the contractor. These updates provided a forum to let them know what was coming.

Midway through the project, we conducted a "dusty shoe" tour to walk interested staff and residents safely through some of the areas under construction and show them what we were doing. We made an evening of it with pizza and dessert.

Developing rules for our subs was also important. Most of these were common sense but the environment and the delicate nature of the facility dictated that common sense be codified. For example:

No radios, no loud talking, company logoed polo and T shirts, badges, sign in, recorded safety meetings, strictly enforced working hours, and schedules distributed and signed off on by all parties—schedules were not theoretical but expected.

Most importantly, we based our selection of subcontractors on the quality of the people as much as the bid. Were they professional? Were they people who would smile and give a warm hello to a passing resident while taking pride in their work?

Finally, when all was said and done, we held a grand reopening event where all residents, families and staff were invited as well as town officials and the press. At the end of the day, residents and staff felt as much a part of the project as those of us working on it.

It's a given that the work has to be done well, safely and on schedule—all for a fair price. But there are many more things that need to be taken into consideration. Specifically, the process.

Over the past 12 years, our company has successfully renovated more facilities than perhaps any other firm in the northeast. It is my belief that the process is as important to that fact as the finished product. No matter how good your company might be, the best finished product is for naught if the residents and/or staff are put out and their routines greatly disrupted. And that's something you can never lose sight of if you want to remain competitive in your efforts to land assisted living, senior living and healthcare renovation projects.

*Tom Quinlan is the president and founder of South Coast Improvement.*