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With the increasing number of clinics and medical centers, Owners are being presented with challenges that are unique to the medical field.

Along with the normal criteria for construction of buildings, other significant guidelines have to be followed, such as patient space, OSHA specifics and medical-specific equipment.

Pat McNamara of de la Parte & Gilbert, P.A. and Dean Head of the

H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, Inc. agreed to let in on some of the things they do to advise on the construction of medical centers and facilities. de la Parte & Gilbert, P.A., is a law firm that specializes in construction and health law, amongst other areas.

Owners Perspective(OP): How was the need for space determined? Did you base this on surveys, patient loads at different hospital/clinics, or other sources? Was a space program of any type used?

McNamara & Head(M&H): The need for space is normally determined by the needs of the client to expand its operations to meet patient needs. In approaching any significant project, a space program is essential to assess needs for space, the type of space needed, as well as to assist the client in

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designing space to enhance its operations and maximize efficiency.

OP: How were goals determined? Were doctors used for their input on any of the particulars of the build and design?

M&H: In medical projects, input from the end users of the facility, such as physicians, nurses, medical staff and administration, is critical in determining space needs. In research

facilities, the types of laboratory work that will be performed, as well as the types and size of equipment that will be needed dictate the space needs. The researchers who will ultimately use the space provide essential input in this process.

OP: Facility location: how was this determined and why?

M&H: Location is a complex issue and includes analysis of availability of

land, access for patients, and costs. The need for future expansion must be considered and careful analysis should be made to determine future land needs for expansion.

OP: How much did different costs affect the design and build? (e.g. land acquisition costs, construction costs, change orders, professional fees (e.g., architects, interior design, etc.)

M&H: Cost is one of the driving components in any project. At the beginning of the project, an Owner shall develop a detailed budget for all aspects of the project: land acquisition, design fees, construction, furnishings and all other components. An Owner should also create a contingency fund to deal with unexpected cost overruns.

OP: What did the design process entail? Was any type of national standard used (e.g., BIM, ConsensusDOCS, etc.)

M&H: The design process begins with the creation of program to determine space needs and uses. The Owner must make itself available and participate in all stages of design early to ensure the final product meet its need. It is also wise to add the contractor or construction manager to the team early to allow it to provide input in the design and to evaluate the constructability of the designs.

OP: Were there any problems encountered (specific to medical buildings) that were unusual and how were they handled?

M&H: The biggest issues relate to the contractor working in and around existing functional facilities. Issues such as these could be described as problems but are a frequent occurrence in healthcare construction. Solution to such problems requires a knowledgeable and willing contractor that is safety focused. ■

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Our knowledge in our major areas of focus – Health Law, Business Transactions, Corporate, Environmental, Government, Eminent Domain, and Litigation – all help us serve owners in one of our nation's most complex industries – construction. de la Parte & Gilbert's attorneys have represented owners, contractors, and design professionals in all phases of construction projects. Our services range from negotiation of design and construction contracts to litigating major construction disputes. Our experience includes all types of project delivery methods from traditional construction contracts to design-build and other construction management.

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