

FROM THE GROUND UP

gulfc coast

cancer center
LARGO



Optimal Outcomes specializes in healthcare facilities

The new Gulfcoast Cancer Center located at 100 Highland Ave in Largo, Florida is yet another example of Optimal Outcomes' capabilities in turning healthcare concepts into realities. The 25,000 square foot facility houses all aspects of cancer treatment including diagnostic imaging, medical oncology and radiation therapy. It provides a new methodology supplemented with cutting edge technology for the delivery of diagnostic and cancer treatment services.

Conceptual discussions with Optimal Outcomes began over two years ago. Gulfcoast Oncology Associates, referred by another healthcare provider, approached Optimal Outcomes with a vision and a challenge. Being the largest provider of medical oncology services in Pinellas County; Gulfcoast Oncology wanted to reinvent the paradigm for the delivery of cancer treatment. They sought to develop a state-of-the-art facility that would enable cancer patients and their providers to realize a single point of service for all aspects of treatment and service – diagnosis, planning, counseling, medical oncology and radiation therapy. Rather than commuting from one location to another for the various services, the new idea was to merge convenience and quality of care in a single location.

Optimal Outcomes has a long and successful track record of developing functional healthcare facilities. Optimal was particularly interested in this project because it involved an approach that was proactive and unique. Rather than reacting to the current way healthcare is provided, Gulfcoast Oncology - in partnership with St. Anthony's Hospital / Baycare Health System - wanted to change the way care was provided. The vision and strategic direction outlined by Gulfcoast's physician partners was exactly in line with what Optimal Outcomes seeks to do – develop healthcare facilities that improve the delivery of healthcare in terms of quality, convenience and cost.

"We went to Optimal Outcomes primarily because they were referred to us with solid references. We had seen other projects they had done in the area and we were impressed with their work," said Dr. Jeffrey Paonessa, President and CEO of Gulfcoast Oncology Associates. "It was apparent from the beginning that they were more than a developer. They not only understood healthcare but they were eager to work with us to create something different to help us realize

our vision. Not only that, but they did exactly what they said they would do. Choosing Optimal made the process simple for us and we could not be more pleased."

Optimal Outcomes, based in Saint Petersburg, Florida, is a developer of ambulatory healthcare facilities. Having developed approximately 400,000 square feet of healthcare real estate in Pinellas County over the past five years, Optimal is a highly specialized niche firm seeking to offer healthcare clients single source accountability and responsibility for all aspects of facility developments. In the case of the new Gulfcoast Cancer Center – Largo, Optimal Outcomes provided a full spectrum of services including real estate identification and acquisition, negotiation and securing of financing, space planning, design oversight, construction and project management and ongoing property management.

"We were pleased and honored to be considered," stated Patrick Marston, Principal of Optimal Outcomes. "Gulfcoast immediately recognized our capabilities and past successes. They trusted us and empowered us to move the project forward. Their vision, supplemented by their trust in us as partners, allowed us to rapidly yet thoroughly define the project so that the end result was achievable. We have been fortunate to have great partners historically and Gulfcoast continued that trend. Their willingness to expound a partnership mentality meant good communication and an efficient process that translated into an excellent outcome. The project was fast-tracked at the request of the client. It was completed in less than a year and came in under budget. We're pretty happy and our partners seem to be pleased also. Ultimately, that is the definition of our success."

The underlying premise of Optimal's business strategy, according to Marston, is that healthcare facilities are far more than "bricks and mortar". Instead, a healthcare facility should be a tool that enhances the underlying practice of medicine. "Anyone can build a building. Very few can build a building that is highly specialized, appropriately designed and value-enhancing to the occupants."

"Exclusive of extenuating circumstances, if a new healthcare facility cannot add value to the core businesses of its occupants then don't build it," says Andrew Boggini, Marston's partner at Optimal. "Invariably rent (or the implicit car-

rying cost) of new space will be greater than old space. The challenge therefore comes from educating clients on how to assess the economic realities and implications of a new facility. In the case of the Gulfcoast Cancer Center, the design was crucial to the economics."

"The initial reception to the facility has been exceptional," stated Marilyn Frystak, COO of Gulfcoast Oncology Associates. "Physicians and patients both compliment the new facility. Some reference the interior space design and aesthetics. Some reference the convenient location and parking. I think everyone appreciates the convenience. We have yet to hear anything negative and our patient volumes are exceeding our expectations. We could not be more pleased."

According to Marston, "every new facility should demonstrably contribute to bottom line performance." Such bottom line contribution is not always self-evident on the construction cost pro-forma. But when you start considering the other implications the economic value will present itself. You need to know what to consider (improved operational efficiency, improved facility efficiency resulting in lower operating expenses, greater patient convenience, improved physician convenience resulting in more encounters per day with same effort, increased staff convenience and morale resulting in less turnover, access to increased or different patient census, better access to Hospitals or ancillary services etc.). Each of these items entails an economic impact that will either make the facility development worthwhile or not. As healthcare comes under more pressure for cost containment hopefully more providers will look at facility development this way.

In addition to its focus on understanding the business of its clients within the healthcare industry, Optimal Outcomes, LLC has been a pioneer in what is certain to emerge as a primary design criterion for healthcare facilities – "evidence-based design". The architectural community is beginning to formalize the process outlined above. In summation, function should dictate form in healthcare design and construction. Further, the "function" should be based on measurable and clearly identifiable data points

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(i.e. length of appointment/encounter based on design layout, patient satisfaction, referrals). The design industry is beginning to supplement the economic considerations used by Optimal with patient considerations such as lighting and color schemes that have been proven to assist wellness and the healing process. Optimal supports this effort entirely and uses only architects with a healthcare-focus. As the process evolves, so too will Optimal Outcomes, LLC and the way they approach the healthcare industry.

Marston and Boggini are steadfast in the philosophy that the status quo is always passé. "If we don't challenge ourselves to create better design criteria and methods of construction we will miss opportunities", says Boggini. "We have to be flexible to meet the current and future needs of the industry. Gulfcoast shared this vision and this mindset made the project rewarding and fun."

Being a privately-held company, Optimal Outcomes is empowered to be creative and flexible in its developments from the way they are designed to the way they are constructed and financed. "Apart from ensuring prudent business decisions, we have no constraints."

To request further information or learn more about Optimal Outcomes, LLC please call (727) 895 8902 or review our website at www.optimal-outcomes.com. ■



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Congratulations Gulfcoast Cancer Center and Optimal Outcomes on a successful project. CGA is proud to be a part of your team!

CGA is a full service architecture and interior design firm specializing in healthcare design and planning

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