



J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital Builds Long-Term Relationship with Clinical Engineering Collaborator, ISS Solutions



SNAPSHOT

Company: J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital

Headquarters: Huntingdon, PA

Business: Sole provider of hospital services for over 50,000 county residents.

OVERVIEW

Challenge:

Build a long-term relationship with a vendor who reliably maintains and services equipment used to improve patient health.

Solution:

Find a provider who progressively improves services in response to client feedback and changing technology.

Benefits:

- Centralized responsibility for clinical engineering
- Financial flexibility
- Effective response to changing demands

Because of its remote location, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital must obtain consistent, reliable service from its vendors. — Nestled near the Juniata River in the picturesque mountains of Pennsylvania, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital is the only hospital in Huntingdon County. Without this hospital, residents would have to travel an hour or more to receive important healthcare services.

Tim Davis, Director of Engineering at J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital, takes seriously his responsibility to provide safe and well-maintained facilities and equipment for members of his community who need healthcare. When Mr. Davis decided to outsource some of these responsibilities, he insisted on a supplier who would provide consistent, reliable service. Mr. Davis selected ISS Solutions and has collaborated with them for over 15 years to ensure that the medical equipment used for the diagnosis, treatment, and comfort of patients at J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital is maintained and serviced correctly.

Centralized responsibility

“When I started with J.C. Blair in 1992,” Mr. Davis explains, “we did not have a clinical engineering program. Each department was responsible for its own equipment; there was no centralized management.” Indeed, in the early 1990s, when Mr. Davis was examining his facilities’ programs, the field of clinical engineering management was just emerging.

Mr. Davis previously worked with ISS Solutions’ predecessor company, ECRI, when he was in charge of facilities at Philipsburg State General Hospital. He was aware of the benefits of centralizing clinical engineering into one cohesive program and set this as a goal for his first year at J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital.

With a centralized program, hospitals can maintain tighter control over their clinical engineering inspection and repair program. Today, hospital regulatory agencies, such as the Joint Commission and the Department of Health, require readily accessible information about equipment inspections and services. A centralized approach ensures that this documentation is available; and, more importantly, it ensures that equipment meets performance standards and is safe.

Financial flexibility

Mr. Davis says, "It's easier and more cost-effective for ISS Solutions—who specializes in this area—to provide the clinical engineering services that we need, rather than to do it ourselves."

Mr. Davis explains that managing an in-house program has numerous costs that outsourced programs do not, including the following.

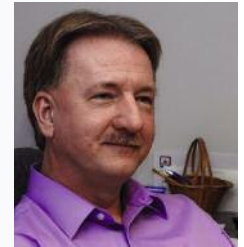
- Recruiting and screening qualified technicians
- Covering technician absences (e.g., for sickness and vacation)
- Purchasing tools, test equipment, and additional training
- Purchasing and maintaining an electronic asset management system
- Maintaining current testing procedures and regulatory knowledge

Because ISS Solutions specializes in clinical engineering management, they perform these tasks at a higher quality level and at lower cost.

By outsourcing clinical engineering services to ISS Solutions, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital can focus staff and financial resources on their core mission, providing quality healthcare to the citizens of Huntingdon County.



"What has kept ISS Solutions at J.C. Blair since 1993 is that the company listens to our needs. We've had three or four different technicians and managers work with us over the years. ISS Solutions has addressed our issues with outstanding flexibility."



—Tim Davis, Director of Engineering, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital

Effective response to changing demands

During the past 16 years, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital has made significant changes to keep pace with advances in healthcare administration, diagnostic and treatment methods, and clinical equipment. Not surprisingly, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital's clinical engineering service program has adjusted in numerous ways as well.

To maintain a successful clinical engineering program, hospital department managers' feedback has been critical. Mr. Davis solicits feedback from his colleagues and responds immediately by addressing issues with the ISS Solutions team. Two examples were a need to include additional information in service documentation and faster response to service calls for specific equipment in critical departments.

These small, incremental changes to the service program are part of the customized service that ISS Solutions provides to keep pace with current trends and technology and to address unique client needs. ISS Solutions views continual improvement a sign of a healthy, robust clinical engineering program.