Hospital Adopts UVC Lights For Infection Control, Green Benefits

BURBANK, Calif., July 30 /PRNewswire/ -- Steril-Aire, Inc., a manufacturer of germicidal ultraviolet C or UVC devices for HVAC systems, reports that the new Muskogee Community Hospital (Muskogee, Oklahoma) is using its UVC Emitters™ facility-wide in an innovative infection control strategy.

The devices are installed in the air handling units and in custom-designed, ceiling-mounted devices in the surgical and procedural suites, marking the first time a hospital has used UVC technology in this way. Steril-Aire devices use high output UVC energy to eradicate airborne viruses and bacteria as well as surface biofilm/mold and pathogens, to improve indoor air quality and reduce hospital acquired infections.

"We are hopeful that UVC technology will help us to record some of the lowest infection rates in the country by keeping bacteria and other microbes continuously in check," reports MCH president Mark Roberts. "We have equipped the hospital with two and sometimes even three layers of UVC protection – in the outside air intake; in the individual air handling units that serve virtually all patient areas; and in ceiling-mounted devices that are specially engineered for 'after-hours' disinfection of the surgical and procedural areas with cleansing germicidal light. Through this approach, we expect to destroy 99+ percent of microbial contaminants."

Red Bud Air Filter Sales & Service (Tulsa) supplied the UVC devices to installation contractor Hogle Mechanical (Muskogee) and worked with the consulting engineering firm of Martin Engineering Design, Inc. (Tulsa) to ensure proper design and application of the product in the hospital's 77 air handling units and seven ceiling units.

The extensive use of UVC with the unique addition of the ceiling-mount units is one of many firsts achieved by MCH. Its environmentally friendly construction has made it the first healthcare facility to garner the EPA's "Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR" recognition. MCH is also the first hospital to use a closed-loop ground source geothermal system that covers the facility's entire heating and cooling needs. Through this and other energy-saving measures, MCH is expected to be 24 percent more efficient than a regular hospital.

"The use of geothermal heat pumps in place of a traditional central HVAC system will give MCH much better zoned control while also saving energy," states Glenn Martin, president of Martin Engineering Design. "The small heat pump units, being located on a mechanical interstitial space, are very easy to access and service. Even with the ease of service, UVC offers an important advantage: It continuously

cleans the coil and drain pan surfaces of biofilm buildup, reducing or eliminating the need for costly manual cleaning and keeping the units in 'as-new' condition so they run more efficiently," Martin explains. "As a result, UVC saves on maintenance and energy."

"Any time we can save money by being green, it's a win-win situation," adds MCH's Roberts, noting that "whether the savings go into better care or lower costs, the patients will benefit".

Muskogee Community Hospital opened in March 2009 to bring a higher standard of care to the community while creating a model of green healthcare design. The physician-owned facility includes 45 licensed patient rooms, four operating suites, three procedure rooms, Level IV emergency room and imaging.

MCH is the first hospital in Oklahoma to be designed and built using the science-based Green Guide for Healthcare and the principles of the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system for New Construction, and is currently awaiting LEED Gold certification.

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