



Becoming a Benchmark Hospital

As part of a €132 million contract, Siemens Healthcare is supplying two new hospitals in the Spanish region of Murcia with state-of-the-art medical equipment for the next 15 years. This will enable the state-run hospitals not only to have financial and planning security during the current economic crisis, but also to be competitive and qualify as regional benchmark hospitals.

By Manuel Meyer



In the Murcia region, 1.5 million residents will be served. Santa Lucía University Hospital in Cartagena is one of ten hospitals to fulfill this need.

There is hardly any other area in Spain where people are as satisfied with their healthcare system as in the southern region of Murcia. In the government's most recent healthcare survey, taken in 2010, two out of three residents of the Mediterranean coastal region not only rated the public health system as good, they also gave healthcare staff the top marks among all public servant groups. Since the spectacular response of doctors, paramedics, and hospital staff to the powerful earthquake that struck the region in mid-May of this year, injuring hundreds, this group of professionals

has built a better reputation with the public than any other. The residents of Murcia have a number of reasons to be satisfied with their healthcare system: While the average wait time for an appointment with a specialist in Spain is 53 days, Murcians wait an average of just 29 days to be seen by a specialist. They also wait only 51 days on average for surgical interventions, while residents of other regions in Spain have to remain patients for about ten days longer. Nonetheless, the healthcare survey also showed that half of Murcians still con-

sider the wait times for appointments with specialists or non-emergency operations at public hospitals to be too long. The overwhelming majority of respondents also indicated that it should take significantly less time to receive test results. That is an opinion that might change soon; at least, that is what Manuel Ángel Moreno Valero, General Director at the new Santa Lucía University Hospital in Cartagena, hopes. The region of Murcia has ten government-operated hospitals to serve its 1.5 million residents. The population of the coastal region around the city of Cartagena, a

popular tourist destination, has grown disproportionately in recent years. In order to help ensure medical care to this growing population, the existing Santa María del Rosell Hospital, located in the city center, reached a mutual agreement with the nearby naval hospital to manage some patients out of the region's 300,000 residents.

Public-Private Partnership

With the opening of the university hospital in Cartagena and Los Arcos del Mar Menor University Hospital, the neighboring town of San Javier, the two major coastal areas of Murcia welcomed two new government-run hospitals at the beginning of this year, providing nearly 1,000 beds. "This means our healthcare needs are adequately covered for the next 25 years," explains María Ángeles Palacios Sánchez, Minister of Health for the Region of Murcia.

The increased number of beds, emergency rooms, and operating rooms will help to solve wait lists: "The situation will definitely improve now that the two new hospitals are open," says Moreno. He adds that having more beds and more treatment rooms is not the only reason wait times and diagnoses are expected to improve. Another major reason is that both hospitals feature the latest in medical technology from Siemens.

As part of a public-private partnership, Siemens Healthcare has equipped the two hospitals with more than 100 imaging systems, such as computed tomography (CT) scanners, ultrasound units, and mammography systems, under a contract placed by the Murcian health ministry. Siemens also set up the entire hospital information and communications system and all of the laboratory systems at both facilities. The €132 million contract includes not only the initial process of



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providing the hospitals with the latest medical technology, service, maintenance, and financing, but it also offers an innovation guarantee. Under the contract, for a period of 15 years, Siemens will ensure that both hospitals can always work with up-to-date medical technology. Siemens will replace the systems with the latest models in each product series at specified time intervals of five, eight, and ten years.

"In times like these, in an ongoing economic crisis that affects public budgets as well, the contract with Siemens not only offers our government-operated hospital top profitability and security in terms of financing and planning for the future, but also allows us to remain competitive, thanks to the first-rate technological innovation guarantee we have received," Moreno explains. But the advantages of working with Siemens go even further, he says: "Always being at the forefront of technology enables us to offer treatment methods and medical interventions that, in turn, shorten the postoperative process. That means that not only do we free up beds again more quickly, but we physicians are also able to treat completely different diseases right here in the region," he affirms.

A Giant Leap in Quality through Siemens Technology

In the field of interventional radiology and cardiology, the university hospital, which was officially opened by Spain's

Princess Letizia at the end of February, could even become a benchmark facility for all of Spain. Thanks to the public-private partnership with Siemens, the hospital has the only Artis zeego® multi-axis robotic technology system on the Iberian Peninsula. With the Ysio digital radiography system and magnetic resonance systems such as MAGNETOM® Espree, Avanto, and Essenza, both hospitals work across the board with advanced technology in the fields of clinical imaging, laboratory diagnostics, and information technology.

In preanalytical and clinical laboratory analysis as well, Santa Lucía University Hospital should become a benchmark hospital at the regional and even national levels in the future, thanks to its ADVIA® LabCell® and ADVIA WorkCell® Automation Solutions. The automated track system, one of the largest of its kind in Spain, is connected to ten analyzers, transporting up to 3,000 blood and urine samples each day. "This will allow us to considerably shorten the time from initially taking the sample to forwarding the test results to the treating physician," Moreno predicts. He does point out, though, that at this point, with the hospital slowly building its activities, it is not yet possible to say how the new technologies and IT systems from Siemens will enhance productivity, reduce costs, or accelerate working processes. "Aside from that, in addition to its technical equipment, a hospital can only

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Minister of Health for the Region of Murcia, Spain.

Summary

Challenge:

- Equip two government-operated hospitals with state-of-the-art medical technology during an economic crisis that is causing budget fluctuations in the public healthcare sector, as in other areas
- Enhance the quality of the state-funded healthcare sector while achieving the best possible cost-benefit ratio

Solution:

- Siemens Healthcare implements its Managed Equipment Services (MES) model, assuming responsibility for providing the initial range of state-of-the-art medical technology and IT systems, financing, service, maintenance, and a 15-year innovation guarantee for the systems

Result:

- Financing and planning certainty for government healthcare sector
- Guaranteed innovation, updates, and replacements for the future
- Quality enhancement and an increased range of treatment and intervention methods through state-of-the-art medical technology
- Status elevated to regional and national benchmark hospital

be as good as its medical staff,” Moreno says, commenting that having the best medical technology available does not help very much if a facility does not also have excellent staff that uses that equipment correctly. This problem did not materialize in this case, however. On the contrary: “Precisely because we now have the most advanced medical technology in the region, our hospital has become attractive for many of the best specialists from Murcia and the rest of Spain,” Moreno says, evidently pleased that he is now able to count on some of the best specialists in their fields. Those specialists include people like José Contreras, a radiologist and the head of the new molecular imaging department. He values the ongoing support and continuing education and training he now receives at the hospital from Siemens employees. In addition to trainers who help physicians and nursing staff learn how to operate the systems, a team of six to

Managed Equipment Services

When the Spanish central government in Madrid transferred responsibility for healthcare policy to the regional governments in 2002, Murcia began to invest more in healthcare than any other of the country's autonomous regions. Over the past nine years, the region has increased its annual healthcare budget by nearly 200 percent, to its current total of €2 billion.

Nonetheless, building two new hospitals and equipping them with state-of-the-art medical equipment at the same time was still a huge financial and logistical challenge for the regional health ministry. "That was why we looked for a private investor to handle the equipment, service, and financing," explains María Ángeles Palacios Sánchez, Minister of Health for the Region of Murcia.

The arrangement marks the first time in Spain that a single technology partner is responsible for original equipment, service and maintenance, updates and replacements, and financing of medical equipment and information technology at a government-operated hospital. This is a completely new business model within the Spanish healthcare sector. Sánchez hopes it will enable the region "to improve the quality of government-provided healthcare in Murcia at the best possible cost-benefit ratio." For technology companies in the healthcare sector, these major contracts for order volumes of €100 million and more

are highly interesting, which is why they can make offers that, in turn, mean tremendous financial savings for the government agencies awarding the contracts, says Sánchez, explaining the decision in favor of the first business model of its kind in Spain.

Starting in May 2009, the health ministry conducted a seven-month series of negotiations, sitting down with various companies in direct competition, until Siemens Healthcare was finally chosen. "Aside from financing and price, 70 percent of our decision was based on technological quality, and in that area, Siemens simply had the best offer," says Sánchez.

Another market in Europe where Siemens Healthcare had previously worked with the Managed Equipment Services (MES) business model is the UK, which like Spain, has a healthcare system that is predominantly financed by the state and providers increasingly have to rely on commitments from private companies.

The Murcian Health Minister expects this business model to yield not only technological innovation, but also – and especially – financial certainty for planning purposes, even during an era when the Spanish economic crisis is expected to lead to budget fluctuations in the public healthcare sector, as in other areas.

eight Siemens experts is assigned to work with the two hospitals on an ongoing basis to service, maintain, and monitor the medical equipment.

A Long-Term Technology Partner

For Siemens Healthcare Spain, it was a tremendous challenge to equip two state-of-the-art hospitals of this size with medical equipment and IT systems at the same time and train the staff. Los Arcos del Mar Menor University Hospital in San Javier has a bed capacity of 329 and occupies about 61,000 square-meters of space. The state-run Santa Lucía Hospital in Cartagena is even larger, and, with 656 hospital beds and total usable

area of about 115,000 square-meters, is about twice the size of the other facility. In just seven months, Siemens installed 18,500 medical systems at the two hospitals, including 100 imaging systems. Regional Health Minister Sánchez is thrilled at the company's performance: "Siemens did this very well and in record time, much faster than we expected beforehand." For Siemens Healthcare Spain, the public-private partnership with the Murcian health ministry was highly important. "We are able to present ourselves on the market as a long-term technology partner, the first to tackle a project on this scale in Spain," explains José Antonio Crespo, the person responsible for the contract at Siemens. In turn,

Crespo adds, Siemens Healthcare itself has naturally gained a great deal of valuable experience in implementing projects of this size and in emerging from direct "competitive dialogue" with other providers – a new concept in Spain – as the winner.

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Further Information

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