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FIELD REPORT

PRIVACY CURTAIN SYSTEM SAVES MONEY AND TIME

At the West Palm Beach (Fla.) VA Medical Center, managers found a way to reduce spiraling maintenance costs while making the health facility's atmosphere more inviting.

Gilda Gomez, the medical center's interior designer and space planner, was on a mission to transform the VA into a welcoming setting where staff could be productive and safe. Part of that transformation included

The name Simply 66 comes from the 66-inch square panels that are fastened to the continuous top mesh required for health care. The snap panels allow each section to be removed and added one at a time. Panels overlap to ensure patient privacy. They are available in many patterns from a variety of health care fabric mills.

If a small section of a traditional privacy curtain becomes soiled, health codes require that the entire cubicle curtain be removed for laundering. "It is time-consuming and costly for the facility, as the housekeeping staff has to search through stocks of replacement curtains to find the correct size," says Gomez.

From an infection control perspective, the VA now can quickly respond if a curtain is stained because the housekeeper can simply take down the effected panel. Since the vast majority of hospitals have ceiling heights of 96 inches or greater, housekeeping staff often must use a ladder to reach the top of a traditional curtain to unhook it from the ceiling track. This puts hospital employees at risk of falling. At the medical center, Gomez points out that it is no longer necessary to use a ladder or to remove the entire bed curtain thanks to Simply 66.

Simply 66 snap panels enable hospital personnel to navigate the facility with loaded carts of clean panels and replace the soiled 66-inch panels as needed. "We were looking for a way to save on the rising cost of laundry, labor and liability without violating health codes," says Gomez. "We've been able to achieve these objectives by integrating Simply 66 into our hospital." ■

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Gilda Gomez, interior designer and space planner at the West Palm Beach Medical Center, changes Simply 66 panels.

patient privacy curtains. However, Gomez knew she needed to be cost-effective to save the hospital from rising maintenance fees.

In January 2008, the hospital adopted Simply 66, a snap curtain system that alleviates the danger and liability associated with the replacement of traditional privacy curtains, while also saving time on installation. In addition, the curtains offer a more bedroom-like feel with warm colors and traditional design.

FACILITY NAME / West Palm Beach VA Medical Center LOCATION / West Palm Beach, Fla.
PRODUCT / Simply 66 privacy curtains