

IPM in Hospitals

There are 5,810 registered hospitals in the U.S. that see about 32 million inpatients, 83 million outpatients and 108 million emergency room patients per year (CDC, 2002. "Hospital Utilization." National Center for Health Statistics. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Hyattsville, M.D.). Today's pest management firms need to think about how to service hospitals with an I.P.M. approach. Hospitals and related accounts in many ways constitute an even more sensitive environment than a school, and many consumer groups are now pushing for responsible, targeted I.P.M. measures in hospital environments.

Hospitals and related accounts, such as nursing homes, assisted living centers, adult daycare, hospice centers, emergency care centers, even veterinary hospitals, all house patients who are ill and temporarily or permanently immuno-compromised (unable to easily fight disease). The patients may inhabit a room only once daily or be in the account long term. Like a school, these accounts will have administrative staff offices, a kitchen, (or several kitchens, sometimes on different floor levels), cafeterias, snack and vending rooms and employee lounges. But, unlike most schools, these accounts also often have other areas for a PCO to think about, such as: research laboratories, pharmacies, imaging and x-ray centers, waiting rooms, nurses' stations, special wards for various procedures and care (neonatal, oncology, cardiac, intensive, pediatric, and psychiatric), radioactive materials areas, sterile operating rooms, morgues, and biohazards and sharps storage areas. Hospitals have no shortage of sensitive areas. This leads to important questions, such as:

- Will the entire hospital be service or just the kitchen, loading docks and cafeteria?
- What and who are the pests involved?
- Who is your main contact and what are their expectations for your service?
- Do they have thresholds of tolerance for the particular pests involved?
- Does the hospital's landscaping contribute to the pest pressures?
- Do you talk with the hospital's Board of Health, the administration, the housekeeping and environmental and facilities staffs?
- Are they all participating in your program?

These issues will all make a huge difference in the way a pest management firm approaches its account. A comprehensive I.P.M. strategy with ongoing communication and documentation with the staff involved will be needed in planning for the next hospital account.