

# OSAGE BEACH CENTER FOR COGNITIVE DISORDERS

Choosing a healthier approach to accreditation

CASE STUDY





## Osage Beach Center for Cognitive Disorders

Caught in a demoralizing game of cat and mouse with its original accrediting organization, the Osage Beach CCD decided to take a page from its own clinical playbook. It courageously broke from old habits and embraced a new approach. It's been a huge culture change.

The Osage Beach Center for Cognitive Disorders (CCD) is a 16-bed psychiatric hospital in Osage Beach, Mo. It is located 175 miles southeast of Kansas City in the heart of the Ozarks. The facility opened in 2014 with 14 beds and was recently expanded to 16 beds.

CCD serves a seven-county area with about 224,000 residents in total. Its patients are primarily being treated for depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and substance abuse disorders. Virtually all have been voluntarily hospitalized.

Like all psychiatric facilities, CCD is facing a variety of challenges. Although psychiatric hospitals perform very few clinical procedures such as surgeries, safety is a critical issue. Mentally ill patients can be a risk for self-harming behavior or suicide. They can also pose a risk to people around them including medical staff and other patients. Even the simplest items can become dangerous objects for someone experiencing a mental health crisis.

CCD is an efficiently operated facility. Its average length of stay in late 2020 was 8.1 days—significantly shorter than the national goal of 9.2 days for psychiatric hospitals. Lengths of stay are a contentious topic in psychiatric care, as some facilities have been criticized for extending stays to boost insurance reimbursement.

For decades, there has been only one organization to accredit hospitals who participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. This frustrated CCD CEO Thomas Flanagan, who was hired in November 2017, the same year CCD was audited no fewer than eight times. Flanagan was recruited to try and

improve the situation.

"It was out of control," he said. "No patients had been harmed. There was no famine, no tornadoes. No emergency of any kind. It seemed as though we weren't being surveyed, we were being targeted."

As if eight surveys in a single year were not enough, CCD was even being subjected to visits based on anonymous tips, leaving hospital leadership to worry about the transparency of the entire accrediting process.

"It felt like we were in a boxing ring," Flanagan said. "Our staff was constantly afraid of the next punch, and that undermines our true focus on our patients and their families."

As an alternative, CCD could have used the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to accredit CCD, but Flanagan saw that program as too rudimentary, offering no meaningful advantage other than, perhaps, less antagonism. "We wanted to take a step forward, and find a more outcomes-oriented accreditation system."

Although Flanagan was aware that there were no other accreditation alternatives for psychiatric facilities at that time, he began casting around for other possibilities, particularly at meetings of the Missouri Hospital Association. In a conversation with executives at CoxHealth, Flanagan heard about DNV for the first time. Although CoxHealth operated acute care facilities, it also had psychiatric beds. DNV has been accrediting CoxHealth hospitals since 2014.



Flanagan reached out to DNV and said if it began accrediting psychiatric facilities, he would like CCD to be the first DNV accredited psychiatric hospital.

CCD became the first psychiatric hospital surveyed by DNV in the fall of 2020. The hospital's first survey began on a humorous note; the DNV audit team arrived on the same day Flanagan had scheduled a mock survey for his internal staff.

"We just went with the flow and tried to learn as much as we could," said Flanagan, who described working with DNV as congenial and productive.

"There seemed to be a much greater focus on the actual patient care being provided and the clinical product as well as the safety issues," Flanagan observed. "It was like a breath of fresh air." The biggest issue that came up during the survey was making sure telephonically transmitted orders for patient care were appropriately signed and dated.

DNV also provided some invaluable insights. "The surveyors wanted to make sure that the systems and subsystems were working in the way that we expected," Flanagan said. CCD made improvements in medical records monitoring as a result. It also installed what Flanagan described as a "subsystem" for analyzing employee and patient actions to ensure important tasks are completed as quickly as possible.

CCD still has some challenges ahead. While formal certification is not required, hospitals are still expected to demonstrate compliance to ISO 9001 Quality Management System requirements. CCD staff will be spending the next

year working toward its ISO 9001 certification.

Flanagan, who has more than 40 years experience managing psychiatric facilities, has some quality training with the Lean process, which was originally developed by Toyota to drive manufacturing excellence. So he's familiar with, and a believer in, standards-based management systems; it's a mindset that helps CCD get maximum value from the ISO 9001 protocols ingrained in DNV's accreditation program.

Meanwhile, like every other hospital in the world, CCD is coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. The institution established specific protocols to deal with COVID-19, based on data from the US CDC, Johns Hopkins University and the Missouri Hospital Association.

"We are small, but we try to be the best for our patients and one another," Flanagan said.

#### COVID-19 Protocols

- Staff temperatures are taken before and after each shift
- Staff is tested anytime they believe they may have had an exposure to COVID-19
- Masks are worn on the premises at all times
- Inventories of protective personal equipment are regularly and rigorously taken
- Patients are not admitted until they have been certified COVID-19 free
- Patients are provided education on how to avoid COVID-19 when in the community



## ABOUT DNV

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DNV draws on its wide technical and industry expertise to help companies worldwide build consumer and stakeholder trust. Driven by its purpose, to safeguard life, property, and the environment, DNV helps tackle the challenges and global transformations facing its customers and the world today and is a trusted voice for many of the world's most successful and forward-thinking companies.

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