

Case Study: Western State Hospital Installation

Facility-wide ligature-resistant initiative
ensures patient safety





Prioritizing Patient's Wellbeing

With more than 11,000 rooms, 860 patient beds and 29 wards, Western State Hospital is the largest psychiatric care facility in the Pacific Northwest. Established in 1871 as the Insane Asylum of Washington Territory and renamed as Western State in 1889, the facility is operated by the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

As one of 20,500 accredited hospitals in the United States, Western State Hospital strives to maintain and exceed the rigorous standards set forth by CMS for providing safe and effective care of the highest caliber and value. In accordance with Joint Commission Standard EC.02.01.01, hospitals must take "action to minimize or eliminate identified safety and security risks in the physical environment," including the identification of any potential safety hazards to patients.

Due to past incidents with patients and safety concerns inherent to the nature of behavioral healthcare facilities, Western State Hospital complied with the Joint Commission's recommendations to cultivate facility-wide ligature-resistant programs that would further ensure the safety and security of patients by inhibiting any tendencies to self-harm. Although the Joint Commission standards do not mandate the type of locksets and door closers to be used in behavioral care facilities, Western State wanted to ensure all patient wards were equipped with the latest preventative solutions to maintain patient safety.

Behavioral healthcare solutions have significant importance and impact to the patients they serve to protect. For hospitals like Western State, these solutions can make a tremendous difference in patient safety and overall facility security. Recognizing the lack of solutions available to behavioral healthcare facilities, BEST® (formerly STANLEY Security) offers an entire portfolio of products specifically tailored to meet the needs of these facilities and to help create environments that can keep patients safe from self-inflicted harm. Through close collaboration with behavioral healthcare professionals, BEST has become one of the leading sources for behavioral healthcare door safety solutions in the industry.

"There really wasn't anything like this on the market at the time. We'd heard of this type of ligature-resistant hardware being deployed at V.A. hospitals prior to this, and [BEST] really delivered a quality product we could trust," said Tim Mount, Carpenter Lead for Western State Hospital.

Upgrading Patient Safety

As part of a widespread ligature-resistant initiative launched throughout the hospital, Western State focused specifically on the doors and closers for all rooms with patient access. When first evaluating the necessary upgrades to be completed at the hospital, BEST installation experts surveyed each of Western State's 11,060 rooms to determine precisely which locks would best accommodate the hospital's needs, ultimately recommending the BEST mechanical locksets for areas accessible to staff, patrons and visitors, and the BEST Patient Safety Lever (SPSL) from the company's Behavioral Healthcare Solutions product portfolio to best accommodate rooms specifically designated for patient access. With a patented ligature resistant lever that meets the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by eliminating the operational requirement "pinch & grasp" motion and ligature-resistant designs, the SPSL provides Western State Hospital with the reliable performance and security found with the traditional BEST products – and the peace of mind for its patients.

"It required a lot of confidence in [BEST] to complete this project...to be able to protect some very vulnerable individuals – our patients. And [BEST] didn't let us down," said Mount.

"They had the best quality product," said Darlene Stevens, Facilities Locksmith for Western State Hospital. "We'd heard about other products that were similar and that they had repeat issues. [BEST] was able to provide us with a reliable product – and they made everything happen in a timely manner that would completely meet our needs as well."

In compliance with this initiative, door closers throughout the hospital also required replacement, with all moveable pieces and arms having to be moved to the hallways in all rooms and patient access areas so that patients could not access them to potentially harm themselves.





Overall, approximately 1,600 SPSL and Mortise locksets have now been implemented in all patient-access areas – including patient rooms, bathrooms and offices. Understanding the delicate nature of adapting the installation process to be completed on active wards without any major disruption, BEST was able to complete the entire installation and implementation process at the facility within a six-month timeframe.

Putting the Locksets to the Test

"I'd guess that these locksets go through 10,000 uses each month, having to endure life cycles well beyond any normally conceived human use – and they're holding up well in one of the harshest environments imaginable," said Mount. "Keep in mind that these are often patients with anger issues, actively trying to destroy doors and mechanisms.

"They're doing great," said Stevens. "They've honestly already exceeded our expectations."



Continuing a Lasting Partnership

Throughout the proposal, design and installation processes, BEST presented itself as an instrumental and unwavering partner in improving the safety of Western State's patients and the overall security of the hospital.

Having worked with a number of hospitals and behavioral healthcare facilities across the country, BEST recognizes the complexities these facilities face while balancing patient safety with facility security. For BEST, the comprehensive installation achieved at Western State Hospital only furthers its goal to assist behavioral healthcare facility staff in ensuring patient safety.

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