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# Health. OaSIS

Jeff Daniels takes a look at how the health delivery system of Abu Dhabi is providing its citizens with the best medical facilities possible

ver 60 years ago, Britain helped change the health expectations of the world by introducing a universal health service to people who previously had nothing. At times, though, buildings and facilities in the NHS don't seem to have changed all that much in half a century, so it makes an interesting comparison to see how the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is doing it in the 21st century.

Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven Emirates or states that comprise the United Arab Emirates (UAE), founded in December, 1971. The UAE has a population of about five million, of which only about 20 per cent are UAE nationals. With the original objective of providing a free health service to Emirate citizens, the government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars over the past couple of decades.

Not surprisingly, Abu Dhabi is investing its resources to develop a healthcare system that is comparable to the best systems in the world. As part of its long range plan, Abu Dhabi is leading the way in the UAE and the region in developing a more modern, responsive healthcare delivery system. In a series of sweeping reforms, it has introduced mandatory health insurance, creating its own government-backed health insurer, DAMAN; a standalone, government regulatory body called the Health Authority – Abu Dhabi or HA-AD; and transferred responsibility for ownership and operation of its public hospitals, clinics and blood banks to a new independent public joint stock company called Abu Dhabi Health Services Company PJSC, whose marketing name is SEHA. *Seha* is an English phonetic representation of the Arabic word for health.



The government's intention in forming SEHA is to put the public healthcare system on a financial and operational footing similar to that of the private healthcare operators in the market, thereby increasing competition, controlling costs and delivering better results to the patient long term. In doing so, it hopes to reduce the number of people who leave the country each year for treatment abroad and develop confidence and trust in local healthcare delivery.

SEHA is the recognized leader in the market at this time with around 80 per cent of all inpatients and 60 per cent of all outpatients in the Emirate served through its facilities. With the increased competition, the challenge is to retain market share but also operate more efficiently to reduce cost exposure while creating a world-class healthcare system.

"Our mission is to continually improve customer care to recognised international standards," explains SEHA's director of Facility & Construction, Saif Fadel AI Hameli. "Our vision is to provide our customers and communities with world-class healthcare, and quality healthcare facilities are an important ingredient in achieving that vision. It is our goal to improve the infrastructure and create a healthcare environment for patients that is competitive with the best health systems in the world."







Winner of the "Best Sustainable Hospital Project" Award at Hospital Build ME 2010



Commended for the "Best Hospital Design (Built & Future)" Award at I Build ME 2010

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"We are passionate about the opportunity to work as partners with SEHA to help them realize their vision and mission to deliver world class healthcare facilities to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Healthcare facilities are more than just buildings. Healthcare facilities are critical elements of community infrastructure which stand to promote the health and wellbeing of all residents and visitors." ASC Team



AL MAFRAQ DIALYSIS CENTER



# "Our mission is to continually improve customer care to recognised international standards"

Starting with a blank sheet, SEHA has formulated its own way of working. As part of its business strategy, it seeks out partnerships with internationally recognised experts. Much of the style comes from the US-generally considered to have the best medical treatment. As such, SEHA calls on the help of institutions such as Johns Hopkins Medicine International and Cleveland Clinic Foundation; but it is just as willing to look to Europe and Asia in the shape of Medical University of Vienna, VAMED and Bumrungrad International.

SEHA owns and operates 12 hospitals with 2,644 beds, 62 ambulatory care, family care and Al Mafraq is situated close to the future Abu urgent care centres and two blood banks. It's Dhabi Central Business District. Surrounded by one of the largest integrated healthcare providers sensitively landscaped grounds, the 272,000

ancillary care and administrative personnel. Now though, there are two exciting new developments in progress: SEHA has started the construction of hospitals at Mafraq and Al Ain. Both areas already have hospitals but they will be replaced within three or four years with new, stateof-the-art facilities. The design of both hospitals has been recognised by being shortlisted for the prestigious Hospital Build Awards in which Al Mafrag came first in the Best Sustainable Hospital Project category.

in the Middle East with 16.500 doctors, nurses,

### AL MAFRAQ HOSPITAL ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Al Mafraq Hospital is a state of the art healthcare facility that promotes sustainability and wellness as an integral part of the healing environment. It is a stellar example of SEHA's unparalleled vision and commitment to achieve world class healthcare design from concept to completion. The project was a collaborative and integrated design effort between SEHA and Burt Hill architects, engineers and landscape architects. Burt Hill congratulates SEHA on the continued success of their organization and admirable vision to create patient centric healthcare environments.

#### Burt Hill

Al Mafraq Hospital will set the benchmark of how healthcare will be delivered in Abu Dhabi. In addition to providing the highest level of care and economies of operation, and a new experience to medical staff and patients, the hospital will become the standard for modern healing environments. It will offer an enhanced and comprehensive patient care program in its delivery of excellent urgent care and general medical services. Al Mafraq Hospital will be a state of-the-art healthcare facility that reflects the future of healthcare in Abu Dhabi.





so st pr co ta ro al





square metre hospital does not disgrace the high standards of architecture in the UAE. Its four prominent patient towers exude contemporary confidence in the state-of-the-art healthcare taking place within.

Each tower contains no more than 30 single rooms per floor, providing 745 beds in total, all featuring large windows and ample natural light. In addition to providing enhanced patient



# **Strategic and Stuctural Partners for Healthcare Development from Concept to Turnkey Delivery**



ICME is a specialized management consultancy firm that supports clients in three core areas: strategy alignment, business creation and operational excellence. The healthcare team offers more than 20 years of successful consulting services within the sector on a European outlook and International basis.

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#### ICME

ICME is a specialized management consulting firm, and healthcare is one of our major areas of experience and project references. ICME offers public and private clients full service advisory and turnkey project management solutions for healthcare development projects.

We consider ourselves advisors and project managers to assist our clients (health ministries, governing bodies, advisory boards and conglomerates) in any of the three dimensions of the development and realization of healthcare projects, be it

1) Strategy planning (national and project level)

2) Healthcare facility planning including design management, functional space programs, medical equipment planning and

3) Site supervision and construction management of a healthcare facility including ambulatory care centres, primary healthcare centres, secondary / tertiary hospital or a rehabilitation centre.

As ICME we have been involved in development projects and planned and designed hospitals, specialised centers and rehabilitative care facilities in the range of 300-1100 beds, both regionally and globally.



environments, the entire facility is designed for long-term efficiency, sustainability and maximum energy savings, with rooftop gardens and the latest energy conservation devices.

Readers familiar with construction in North America will be aware of LEED-Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-which is driving up standards in sustainable design and construction, particularly among public buildings with silver, gold and platinum grades. In the UAE, the system is known as Estidama, which awards up to five pearls for the highest standards.

"SEHA works to recognised international standards," confirms AI Hameli. "Engineering is carried out by specialised engineers and then independently reviewed by the project managers' team before being submitted to different governmental departments for peer review and approval. Underlying all work is the demand to achieve at least two pearls on the Estidama scale. "We design and supervise the construction through specialised project managers and consultants," he continues. "We adopt a teamwork policy with all project partners, helping them to do good work for SEHA with the focus and aim of providing the best healthcare services for our patients."

Both facilities have been designed using



# National Projects & Construction (NPC) was established as a part of Royal Group in 2003.

From small beginnings as a managing contractor, NPC is considered now as one of the fastest growing contractors in Abu Dhabi with strategic local knowledge and expertise. NPC have the full support of the 60 companies' wide network operating under the Royal Group which assisted in the NPC's rapid growth and success.

NPC provides a wide range of services that span the width of the industry and covers five main divisions (Building Construction, Infrastructure Construction, MEP services, False Ceiling & Partition installation and Maintenance services). NPC owns a vast equipment resources, including new low emission vehicles and equipments worth over 150 Million AED. NPC have also an experienced staff of project managers, engineers and proven labor that grew from 50 employees in 2003 to over 6800 employees in 2009.

NPC have accumulated experience as a main contractor that extends from mixed use buildings, Residential, Mass Housing, Healthcare, Hospitality, Retail and commercial projects, to infrastructure necessities. NPC is currently working on a real estate project portfolio worth AED 5 billion, having won major construction contracts from several prestigious property developers in the Capital.



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#### Al Shafar General Contracting Co. (ASGC) is the flagship company of the Al Shafar Group of Companies.

It was established in the year 1989 to participate in the development programs in the UAE and was subsequently converted to a Limited Liability Company in the year 1997. ASGC has an extensive range of construction expertise in building works namely Multistorey Towers, Hotels, Commercial & Office buildings, Residential Buildings, Villa Complexes, and Shopping Malls in addition to other specialized type of works.

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environmentally friendly and energy efficient design elements and will be constructed under the most stringent sustainable principles available. Wastewater will be recycled, and electrical consumption minimised through the use of lowvoltage LED fibre optic interior sun lighting powered by solar panels. Passive cooling and shading will minimise the need for air conditioning, although in 50-degree summer heat, nothing will fully replace it.

"To make sure there is continuity of these critical services and a comfortable environment for patients, contractors are obliged to use only the highest quality equipment for both electrical and mechanical works, including providing electrical back-up generators and additional chillers to make sure that the services are provided continuously," says Al Hameli. "SEHA also contracts with private specialised maintenance contractors to maintain the equipment and the facilities to a high standard."

Finding one's way around the vast building is aided by the incorporation of elegant sculptural elements into the building's fabric and memorable water features that orient visitors to the patient services in the Middle East. www.seha.ae •

One of the problems all hospital designers face is ensuring that in the time between when plans are first laid to the day doors open for patients, technological advances haven't overtaken the builders and the facilities are saddled with equipment that is already outdated. By consulting with all sectors of the community-medical and engineering-the hospitals are being designed to accommodate all known equipment; but there has to be a flexibility to live with last minute changes. "We at SEHA adopted a policy to procure the medical equipment only as the end of the project approaches, to make sure that the facility is provided with the most up-to-date and recent medical equipment and technologies," savs Al Hameli. When the new hospitals open in 2013 and 2014,

towers' elevator lobbies. Local cultural sensitivities have been catered for, with a separate tower and entrance dedicated to speciality services for mothers and children.

