



CASE STUDY

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Addition and Alteration Program

Located in Bethesda, Maryland, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, often referred to as the "President's Hospital" due to its role in caring for U.S. presidents and other high-ranking officials, is the largest military medical facility in the United States. Serving as a central hub for healthcare, research, and education, Walter Reed provides critical medical care to service members, veterans, and their families while supporting global military operations and advancing medical innovation.

The Medical Center Addition and Alteration program, also known as P114, is a \$600 million modernization effort to enhance the facility's ability to meet the evolving needs of military medicine and provide world-class care. The project is to be constructed in three phases, with the first two phases to consist of demolition and new construction, and a third phase to consist of extensive renovations. Phase 1 involved demolishing six outdated buildings totaling 283,700 square feet and

constructing a six-floor medical tower covering 574,611 square feet. Critical utility upgrades and the relocation of utilities into a newly built underground tunnel were also included.

CHALLENGE

Successfully executing such a program required addressing multiple challenges. From the outset, the program's scale and complexity demanded seamless coordination among an extensive and diverse set of project stakeholders—including the Naval Facilities Systems Engineering Command (NAVFAC), the Defense Health Agency (DHA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), multiple hospital departments, Naval Support Activity Bethesda and its tenants, the builder and designer teams, and others. Navigating the wide array of responsibilities and priorities was essential, especially as maintaining full hospital operations during construction demanded meticulous planning to ensure patient safety and uninterrupted care. These overlapping demands underscored the importance of a unified, solutions-oriented approach to meet program milestones while upholding the highest safety and risk management standards.

SOLUTION

MBP was brought on to help the project team navigate the complexities of the P114 program by providing third-party facilitation services, governance oversight, schedule coordination, and risk management support.

Since MBP assumed oversight of the risk register, the project team has expanded the risk register from 45 to 118 risks, actively managing approximately 50 at any given time.

Tiered Governance

Central to MBP's approach was the adaptation of a robust three-tier governance structure comprised of a Project Leadership Team (PLT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and Executive Leadership Team (ELT). This structured framework gave project leaders clear connections with counterparts, establishing communication and decision-making pathways across all stakeholder levels and facilitating effective collaboration and accountability. MBP led periodic governance meetings at each level, developing agendas to focus the teams on the most critical management, issue resolution, and decision tasks and continuously tracking and communicating action deadlines. Together, MBP's leadership in partnering and governance optimized alignment across the nine major stakeholder organizations.

Big Room Partnering

MBP supplemented the governance cadence with a number of efforts that served to make the project governance work better. The team conducted several "Big Room Partnering" meetings—all-day workshops with up to 80 leaders from all stakeholder groups collaborating to address high-interest issues and plan for upcoming project phases and activities. Each workshop generated an action plan that was woven into the periodic governance meetings, served to orient new team members, gave all stakeholders a voice in project plans, and informed leaders about priorities and needs they may not have known or understood.

MBP's services also included on-call issue resolution intervention. On more than 20 occasions, MBP

facilitators met with small groups of project leaders to address tough challenges, including incident recovery, communications protocol development, process refinement, contract disputes, criteria clarification, course of action development, schedule recovery, and others

Team Performance Surveys

Early in construction, MBP developed a team performance evaluation to give leaders periodic feedback on the effectiveness of project management and governance in the areas of quality, safety, schedule, budget, teamwork, and communications. Surveys also gave leaders a forum to share tough truths with their colleagues regarding unmet needs and improvements required. While the team gave itself consistently high marks throughout three years of construction, leaders used it as a tool to encourage each other to get better every quarter. These surveys fostered trust and transparency, driving process enhancements that ensured the project's overall success while cultivating a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Project Risk Register

In parallel, MBP's risk management efforts became a cornerstone of the project's success. Since MBP assumed oversight of the risk register, the project team has expanded the risk register from 45 to 118 risks, actively managing approximately 50 at any given time. Risk identification and mitigation became a regular element of each leadership team meeting, and a monthly field team engagement focused entirely on identifying new risks and evaluating ongoing mitigations. This process ensured that critical challenges were proactively addressed, such

In addition to governance and risk management, MBP focused on sustaining a high-performing team culture. Periodic team health surveys assessed performance in key areas such as quality, safety, and collaboration, providing actionable insights for continuous improvement.



as maintaining uninterrupted hospital operations during construction and responding to unannounced closures to receive high-level visitors.

Integrated Master Schedule

Midway through phase 1 construction, MBP recognized a need to develop an integrated Master Schedule (IMS). The team created a dynamic tool that visualized interdependencies across construction, utilities, telecommunications, cybersecurity, medical equipment procurement and installation, and adjacent repair projects. The tool evolved as Phase 1 neared completion to focus on critical completion issues and their constraints, allowing leaders to visualize the wide array of challenges and decision needs. The use of collaborative pull planning, two years and again one year ahead of planned project completion, further reinforced project efficiency by identifying potential conflicts early and promoting alignment among stakeholders around critical milestones.

RESULT

Working in the center of a fully operational but 70-year-old medical campus does not lend itself to change- or problem-free construction. The P114 project team worked

skillfully with MBP's help to manage risk and change and solve problems collaboratively and effectively. They expedited Phase 1 submittals, completing more than 3,000 of them two years before Phase 1 completion, which freed up resources to focus on planning for Phases 2 and 3 of this seven-year project. They worked through a continuous stream of construction changes without delaying work in the field, and they processed several thousand RFIs, averaging just a 12-day turnaround. MBP's expertise in governance, risk management, and collaborative problem-solving was essential to advancing the P114 program and addressing its unique challenges. Through a clear governance structure, MBP enabled the team to identify and mitigate risks, resolve conflicts efficiently, and maintain stakeholder alignment. Pull planning sessions and team health surveys promoted transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, ensuring the successful delivery of critical upgrades to Walter Reed. MBP acted throughout as an impartial advocate for better project outcomes, and stakeholder leaders leveraged MBP's technical expertise and management agility to address the ever-changing set of project needs and challenges. This approach offered a scalable model for optimizing efficiency and stakeholder collaboration on future programs.

“MBP’s work on the P-114 Walter Reed Medical Center Addition/Alteration has been critical to the project’s success so far. The involvement of several Flag-represented stakeholders, multiple construction contractors, and a multi-phased design and construction effort spanning several years working on “The President’s Hospital” creates an environment that requires significant partnering and risk analysis support. MBP has delivered superior performance to the team and project. They have received compliments from all team members over the past few years for providing service, and their insight/service is often requested to assist in breaking down team barriers and help arrive at critical solutions.”

- Jason Root, Director, NAVFAC Medical Facilities Program Officer

ABOUT MBP'S PROGRAM CONSULTING SERVICES

MBP takes a holistic approach to large, complex programs. As nationally recognized construction management, consulting, and facilitation practitioners, we combine our boots-on-the-ground construction experience with our consulting expertise to evaluate program costs and schedules and minimize potential risks. Similar to your own personal health, proactive measures ensure long-term success. Our role encompasses working with program stakeholders to advise, guide, and steer effective decision-making processes throughout the program's lifecycle.