

## **Category: 9 – Best Building Project – General Contractor (\$26.6M)**

### **Contractor: Brinkman Construction**

### **Project Name: Eating Recovery Center**

The construction of Eating Recovery Center's newest behavioral health hospital in Denver proved to be as challenging and unique as the treatment happening inside the walls of the 62,000 SF facility. From the dewatering of the site to the extensive anti-ligature modifications to every fixture in the building, this project required creativity and strict attention to detail from the Brinkman Construction team to ensure a safe and healing place for eating disorder patients.

Eating Recovery Center (ERC) is a three-story behavioral health hospital that provides inpatient treatment for people of all ages suffering from eating disorders. The facility offers 70 overnight beds, commercial kitchens, offices, a patient spa, and underground parking for patients and visitors.

Brinkman Construction was the general contractor for both the core/shell and interior build out. Westside Investment Partners developed the project and ERC is the sole tenant.

#### Excellent Client Service Despite Challenges

The construction team encountered and overcame several challenges during the course of constructing this unique facility. The first major challenge arose with the dewatering of the site. The design required excavation below the static groundwater level in order to build the sub-surface parking structure. Due to the contamination of the groundwater and the mineral make-up of the discharged waters, an onsite water treatment plant was set up to treat the water for total suspended solids, iron, manganese, and lead before disposal into the storm drain.

Due to early groundwater investigation a year before groundbreak, the preconstruction and construction teams were able to build a plan early that incorporated these considerations into the budget and timeline, ultimately saving the client costly mitigation strategies.

While early planning can prevent many challenges, every construction project comes with unique surprises that arise during the construction process. The Eating Recovery Center proved especially distinct due to their accreditation with the Joint Commission. The Commission has

rigorous standards for quality and safety that must be met to obtain and maintain accreditation. During construction, accreditation standards were updated resulting in the mandate to reorder and reinstall materials and fixtures including: light fixtures, door hardware, ceilings, plumbing, air diffusers, and three miles of pick-proof caulking, to name a few.

The construction team worked closely with subcontractors, suppliers, and the design team to install temporary solutions and execute out-of-sequence work to minimize negative impacts on the schedule. Upon completion, the Eating Recovery Center received the Gold Seal of Approval from the Joint Commission.

The jobsite also required a challenging site logistics plan due to a shared driveway with Donor Alliance, an organ procurement organization and tissue bank. Due to the time sensitive nature of facilitating the donation of organs and tissues, obstructing this driveway could endanger a life. To ensure the driveway was kept clear 24/7, the construction team connected with Donor Alliance management to coordinate operations and eliminate the possibility of disruption to their work.

### Dedication to Jobsite Safety

For a jobsite of this magnitude, a strong safety program is crucial. Including subcontractors, the jobsite clocked in more than 300,000 total worker hours with no recordable safety incidents due to the stringent safety program in place.

The entire project team – from upper management to trade workers – were dedicated to enforcing Brinkman Construction's Zero Incident Safety Culture. The first step of the safety program was the First Day Safety Orientation for every worker on the site. Each person was provided a badge to indicate they completed training and were knowledgeable about the high level of safety expectations required by Brinkman Construction's Health and Safety program.

After this initial training, the jobsite superintendent kept safety top of mind for all employees through daily job-specific safety assessments with documented Job Hazard Analysis, weekly mandatory safety meetings, and rehearsals of the emergency response plan. The daily safety assessments required foremen to review each of their team members' tasks, point out potential risks, and identify how they plan to mitigate those risks. This detailed focus on safety in real-

time proved beneficial to the team who experienced no significant safety concerns through the duration of construction.

On many jobsites, weekly safety meetings consist of a cursory review of potential concerns followed by a list of safety practices. On the Eating Recovery Center jobsite, however, the mandatory weekly meetings included trial run-throughs, special props, and simulations that engaged the team through real-life examples.

One of the most effective elements of the Eating Recovery Center safety program was the rehearsal of the emergency response plan. This plan was operationalized when a painting foreman collapsed due to a personal health issue. The construction team executed the emergency response plan flawlessly and was able to get the individual to the hospital for treatment quickly and efficiently.

#### Contribution to the Community

First and foremost, the contribution of this project to the community is a safe place where people suffering from eating disorders can come to heal. Eating disorders have the highest level of mortality of all mental health issues. Due to the serious nature of these illnesses, every detail throughout the 62,000 SF building was thought through, tested and retested for quality and safety, and altered when necessary.

The trauma-informed and anti-ligature constructability techniques used throughout construction required special attention from every member of the project team. Since custom-made fixtures and appliances needed to be used to ensure patient safety, the team worked with suppliers, vendors, and subcontractors to ensure early procurement of materials.

The project team provided leadership in finding innovative ways to ensure patient safety while also adhering to timelines and budgets. The quality of the building will not only provide the client with a Joint Commission-accredited building, it will also aid in the recovery process for thousands of people.

The construction team provided an exceedingly high level of attention to detail to meet the needs of the unique occupant of this space. They toured other Eating Recovery Center facilities to fully understand the end user's needs and bring creative strategies to the construction process.

Understanding that the pharmacy inside the Eating Recovery Center was going to take several additional months to obtain the licensing to operate, the team completed and turned over the pharmacy four months early so it could be operational on day one of the facility opening.

### Innovative Building Techniques

The construction of this facility was fully coordinated with Building Information Modeling (BIM) so the client and project team could explore the physical and functional characteristics of the hospital as changes were being made. Using the model enables the ability to keep the design in sync with the budget and schedule. This was especially crucial after obtaining the updated Joint Commission accreditation requirements.

Along with the use of BIM, the team implemented a rigorous QA/QC program. While still in the preconstruction phase, constructability reviews were completed to resolve issues before construction began. Once mobilized on site, the construction team held First Work-in-Place meetings with each subcontractor at the beginning of any significant construction activity with the expressed goal of ensuring the highest quality and workmanship for each scope of work.

This phase is crucial on a project in which there are no “off the shelf” constructability techniques or materials being used. The client and design team joined the superintendent onsite for First Work-in-Place meetings to guarantee every inch of the building was built to the Joint Commission standards.

### Design Collaboration

Boulder Associates worked closely with the owner to develop a patient-informed design with a focus on bringing the outdoors in. The interior elements give patients a soothing environment with natural light and the simulation of being in nature. These techniques have been proven to reduce stress and support healing. Brinkman Construction collaborated closely with the design team to ensure we were executing on this vision.

Special installations to fulfill this function can be found throughout the building. The main entrance includes a 15-foot-tall art mobile in the shape of falling leaves that hangs from a ceiling two floors high. This aesthetic was intended to provide a welcoming and calming first impression.

The elevator lobbies include a digital fish tank, soft lighting, and beetle kill pine accents to continue the focus on nature throughout the building. Since bathrooms are often a triggering space for eating disorder patients, the design of those areas was especially unique. Referred to as “patient spas,” the bathrooms included specialty made anti-ligature fixtures and appliances and artificial skylights that emulate looking into the sky. Distorted mirrors around the perimeter of the bathroom minimize obsessive body checking behaviors and slanted toilet stall doors allow privacy while reducing the ability of patients to lock themselves in a stall and engage in behaviors dangerous to their health.

Throughout the building, especially in bedrooms and gathering areas, frosted windows are utilized to minimize reflection and help patients focus on healing.

From preconstruction through closeout, Brinkman Construction partnered with the design team to fully understand the intention behind the functional and aesthetic design. The result of this collaboration is a truly unique, state-of-the-art behavioral health hospital that will be one of the best in the world for eating disorder patients.





















