

Bulk Medical Oxygen System Installed Quickly During Initial Pandemic Peak.

Brooklyn Center for Rehabilitation and Residential Healthcare installed a new bulk medical oxygen system in just a few weeks during the Spring 2020 COVID-19 surge.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit New York City, the Brooklyn Center for Rehabilitation and Residential Healthcare anticipated an increase in capacity as it prepared to handle expected overflow from neighboring hospitals. The recently completed nursing home needed a bulk medical oxygen system to supply 200 ventilator beds before it could accept patients.

Given that no one could predict how fast the caseload might rise during the pandemic, an exceedingly tight deadline was set for installing the system. The nursing home brought in a medical gas distributor, Virtair (New Hyde Park, NY), to deliver and construct a permanent bulk medical oxygen system.

Virtair approached Messer, the world's largest privately held industrial gas business and Virtair's partner on bulk systems, in mid-March 2020 to plan and install the system.

"We were staring in the face of hundreds maybe even thousands of patients that needed a tremendous amount of oxygen to breathe, and they needed it very quickly – in days as opposed to weeks or months," says Virtair owner Will Wasserman.

Amid the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, Virtair and Messer rose to the occasion and compressed a normal timeline of several months into just over one month. Wasserman says the key to speeding up the project was straightforward and parallel approvals. Actions such as permits that would normally happen over weeks and months took just hours.

"Bulk planning normally takes a very long time, six months just to get it going," says Wasserman, who served as liaison with all parties. "I've never seen approvals that quickly – ever. The whole project was approved within a



In the midst of uncertainty around COVID-19, Virtair and Messer went above and beyond to execute a safe and timely bulk medical oxygen installation at Brooklyn Center for Rehabilitation and Residential Healthcare.

week. Messer, the city building and fire departments, the governor's office, etc. – everyone just really got it done."

Virtair, Messer and Brooklyn Rehab drafted a project agreement at the end of March. Serving as the liaison with Messer and Brooklyn Rehab, Virtair shepherded negotiations and the three companies executed the agreement on April 1, 2020.

Accounting for the uncertainty of peak flows and necessary capacity, Messer's Hospital Services group and Virtair came up with a suitable design.

Messer's Hospital Services team helped secure the necessary permits from the Fire Department of New York (FDNY). The team swiftly coordinated drawings, freight for

the equipment and cranes and rigging for the installation to meet tight deadlines. Meanwhile, Brooklyn Rehab had the bulk medical oxygen station foundation installed. During the height of the pandemic, the project team took virus-prevention safety measures, and rose to the challenge.

“Given the anticipated need, we put in a system much larger than we would normally need,” says Wasserman.

The system features a 3000 gallon main tank and a 1500 gallon reserve tank, more than double the normal backup capacity for a main tank that size.

Virtair and Messer also specified and installed an upsized vaporizer. The three-circuit “hospital vaporizer” has two circuits for the main tank. The circuits switch intermittently to help maintain vaporizer performance and prevent freezing and icing.

The bulk medical oxygen system was installed and commissioned on April 21, 2020, three weeks from initial agreement. “The project moved very smoothly and efficiently,” says Wasserman. “Messer performed as one cohesive team and communicated very well with us.”

Wasserman appreciated the safe and timely delivery of the installation, and he says Brooklyn Rehab was delighted. The bulk system operated as designed and is now in use for day-to-day operations.

“It (installing a new bulk medical oxygen station) would’ve taken months to a year in a normal situation,” Wasserman concludes. “They were provided the opportunity to help a lot of people and they were thrilled about it. It was a huge win all around.”



Messer Americas

200 Somerset Corporate Blvd
Suite 7000
Bridgewater, NJ 08807
Phone: 1-800-755-9277
sales@messer-us.com
www.messer-us.com

