Managing Infrastructure Risk in Healthcare Facilities

Sustaining the infrastructure of health care facilities is not a simple task. Facility owners and operators are responsible for old and decaying buildings with relatively basic infrastructure, new buildings infused with the latest high-tech systems, and everything in between. Funding is a constant issue. The risks of infrastructure failure – risks to staff, public, patients, care delivery – are real and significant. And all of this is managed within the contexts of increasing regulation, and expanding stakeholder expectations.

How do we manage these competing demands effectively, sustainably, transparently?

The Facilities Team at Vancouver General Hospital, with support from the Vancouver Coastal Health executives, Risk management and KPMG, has developed a system to achieve these goals. The objective of the presentation is to describe this system; how it was conceived, developed and implemented; and is now being sustained and expanded to other facilities within the health authority.

Every facility manager will be familiar with the topics and terminology presented. Every facility manager is already performing many if not most of the tasks that will be outlined. What may be missing for many, and was certainly missing at Vancouver General Hospital, is the framework, the glue that binds these tasks into a cohesive whole; a self-sustaining system.

The self-sustaining system speaks to a number of themes:
- Objectives and Scope
- Accountability and Reporting
- Document and Record Control
- Competence, Awareness and Training
- Operation and Maintenance Process and Procedures
- Emergency Preparedness
- Assessment, Incident Analysis and Continuous Improvement

The system – a Risk management Framework, or RMF although other terminology is sometimes applied, embodies a number of specific elements including:
- Risk Management Framework i.e. the defining document
- Risk Register
- Asset Inventory
- Preventive maintenance
- Staff Training
- Safety Programs
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Reporting

Application of the RMF allows us to:
- Mitigate operational risks
- Guide maintenance activities
- Demonstrate stewardship
- Help prioritize equipment and system-specific infrastructure maintenance and renewal
- Support business cases for funding
- Predict outcomes of funding reductions
Predict and demonstrate outcomes of funding increases
Promote the Facilities Management team and objectives

The purpose of the presentation will be to:

- Outline the history and development of the pilot RMF at VGH
- Describe the various elements comprising the RMF (many, if not most, of these elements already exist at most facilities)
- Describe how the RMF binds the various elements together into a cohesive system
- Discuss the options and resource requirements to implement and sustain an RMF
- Scaling the RMF to the specific needs of different systems and facilities
- Discuss how the RMF supports the Corporate risk management strategy
- Discuss the roles of the various RMF team members
- Provide real examples of how the RMF is used to guide maintenance and renewal
- Provide examples of how capital projects input to the RMF