



V A L E T P A R K I N G

# CURBSIDE

## A Case Study of: Jordan Hospital's Valet Program

*As hospitals endeavor to become more "patient-friendly," valet parking has emerged as a desirable and low-cost customer service solution for many leading hospitals nation-wide. Increasingly, there is an expectation that quality healthcare institutions, much like hotels, offer valet parking; furthermore, that the hospital's valet parking attendants not only welcome patients and visitors, but also assist them with an array of concierge-like services. The following case study examines how the need for valet parking was identified and subsequently implemented at Jordan Hospital in Plymouth, MA.*

### BACKGROUND

Jordan Hospital is a not-for-profit, 150-bed hospital serving residents of Plymouth, MA and the surrounding community for nearly a century. The Hospital provides a full range of healthcare and wellness services, and is currently engaged in a 10-year expansion project. Administrators expect admissions to increase 50% and outpatient visits to double by 2010. Today Jordan Hospital is experiencing capacity issues in many of the areas expansion is intended to address including: general patient bed space, radiology, surgery—and visitor parking. Current parking capacity is approximately 650 spaces, with expectations for 1,000 total spaces by 2010.

### IDENTIFYING THE NEED

"Parking was an issue that was coming up more and more on the patient satisfaction surveys as a 'problem,'" says Russell Avena, Jordan Hospital's Vice President of Clinical and Support Services.

As Avena recounts, at times patients could not find parking or that parking they could find was remote. As patients encountered these unforeseen inconveniences upon arriving at the hospital, delays resulted. Consequently, many patients—particularly those recovering from troublesome mobility-improving surgeries, such as knee and joint operations—were late for appointments. Although parking was, and continues to be, free of charge, it was scattered and spaces were limited.

"Volume at the hospital has grown so much lately, especially on an out-patient basis, that we realized we needed to address the parking problem," Avena explains.

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## **JORDAN HOSPITAL'S PARKING ISSUES WERE TYPICAL OF THOSE EXPERIENCED AT OTHER HOSPITALS. THEY INCLUDED:**

- *Patients complaining to administration of their doctors of insufficient parking spaces*
- *Patients and or/visitors circling the garages and parking lots looking for spaces*
- *Patients with limited mobility having to walk long distances, sometimes up hills, to reach the entrance*
- *Employees parking being moved to remote off-campus locations to free up space*
- *Construction projects taking parking spaces, thus worsening the parking situation*

## **THE REVIEW PROCESS**

Upon assessing the needs, a meeting was set up with Curbside president John Udelson to discuss the services Jordan Hospital required. As Udelson explains, Curbside's valet attendants are trained to provide front door "concierge" level service, including welcoming and greeting patients and visitors, providing directions, helping with infant seats or baggage, obtaining wheelchairs, holding umbrellas, and providing traffic control. Attendants often free up other hospital personnel. Amongst those are security officers who are distracted from protecting hospital visitors and staff to provide traffic control or help out at entrances simply because no one else is available.

At the meeting, Curbside outlined the cost of the service, which is based on an all-inclusive per valet attendant, per hour rate. This rate includes recruitment, human resources, training, supervision, uniforms and equipment, and insurance—freeing the hospital of any operational responsibility. Curbside also noted the importance of marketing the service, offering assistance in this effort by providing signage and other promotional material.

After the meeting, Curbside sent Jordan Hospital a proposed strategic operational plan detailing the cost and number of valet attendants. The proposal also included a list of clients and references.

"Because we're a non-profit institution, we have to look at every budget expense prudently. But it was obvious to everyone how much valet parking would benefit patients and visitors," Averna says. Additionally, because Curbside offers welcoming services and other concierge functions, and displayed the flexibility and willingness to partner up to create a specific program to fit Jordan Hospital's needs, "the decision was not a difficult one to make. The senior managers had the final decision, but because everyone recognized the need, they did not have a hard time getting the expenditure approved."

## **IMPLEMENTING THE VALET PARKING SERVICE**

Averna reports, once the decision was made it took between five and six weeks to implement valet parking services at Jordan Hospital. During that time, Curbside recruited and trained staff, ordered equipment such as radios and Nextel direct-connect telephones, and developed policies and procedures in accordance with the Hospital's requirements, all in preparation for the start-up date.



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The Hospital set aside an area in a "near site" parking lot and purchased jersey barriers to set it off from the rest of the lot and to keep it secure. Averna explains that they chose not to use a remote area because they recognized the importance of having the valet attendants greeting and assisting patients as they arrived at the Hospital rather than trekking to and from an outlying designated parking.

Simultaneously, a meeting was scheduled with Jordan Hospital marketing personnel to review marketing materials: signage, posters, envelope stuffers, and tent cards for tables in high traffic areas. Marketing materials arrived and were circulated to inform patients and visitors that valet parking was on its way. Meanwhile, Jordan announced the upcoming service to the public through press releases (see sample press release on back page), local advertising, and in a prominent location on their website.

The start-up date arrived and Jordan Hospital's program was fully operational from its initiation. Professional well-dressed valet attendants and managers were on site to assist and greet the customers. The operation was closely monitored and adjustments were made as necessary.

The Hospital had hoped to have additional signage placed around their neighborhood, but posting signs in areas abutting the main thoroughfares was not permitted and, hence, all of the signage had to be positioned on hospital grounds. Despite this setback, the service began to catch on. Now when patients book appointments they are informed of this helpful, and complimentary service. Curbside's marketing program collaborates with partner hospitals to promote the service. In this case, Jordan Hospital now includes information about the valet service in the appointment confirmation notices sent out by its centralized billing system.

## THE CONCLUSION

The bottom line is that patients love the valet parking. About 70-80 people per day now use the service, which operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. After an initial adjustment, the service has become an instrumental part in Jordan Hospital's efforts to continually raise the level of its customer focus.

"People were cautious about turning over the car to someone else," Averna says, "but in getting the word out we stressed that it was a free service, paid for by the hospital. And the valets were so nice and helpful—so news started to spread."

Having a well-established valet parking program in place is especially helpful to the Hospital, now that they are entering a new phase of their expansion involving new construction, as well as a series of new and changing detours, roads, and entrances.

"We're going to be relying more and more on the valets to help people find their way around the hospital," Averna explains. "We want to ensure ease of access. Everyone loves the service—and it's getting more and more popular."

*Valets are trained to provide  
front door "concierge" level service.*

## JORDAN HOSPITAL SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

The following press release has been used to announce the valet service at Jordan Hospital.

Patients coming to Jordan Hospital today were greeted at the main entrance by uniformed valet parking attendants who whisked their cars off to a safe parking area and welcomed patients and families into the main lobbies.

In an effort to increase access and ease parking difficulties for patients and visitors, Jordan Hospital has engaged Curbside Valet Services to provide valet parking and related services. At Jordan Hospital, Curbside's welcoming and valet services are free of charge and available for patients and visitors weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Bailey main lobby entrance. Colorful orange and blue signs in and around the hospital direct patients and visitors to a valet who also manages wheelchairs, installs infant car seats, and provides other miscellaneous entry and exit services. Attendants are equipped with everything from umbrellas during inclement weather to detailed directions to destinations inside the hospital.

"Valet parking responds to feedback we've received from patients and from the community," says Alan Knight, CEO and president. "We are experiencing a greater volume of daily traffic due to the focus on out-patient services, serving larger numbers of patients in general, and expansion of hospital services. Although our future expansion plans include 600 additional parking spaces which will also help address the issue, patients and visitors should not have to worry about where to park when coming to the hospital. Reaching beyond hospital doors to encompass accommodations for ease of parking and access is an important part of the service we provide."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

*concerning this case study or about valet parking services,*

*call Curbside toll-free at*

*(866)CURBSIDE OR*

*(617)421.9800*