



# Bozrah Company Making Temporary Hospital Beds for State

The state has ordered 3,000 temporary hospital beds from Gilman Brothers.

By **Siobhan McGirl** • Published April 9, 2020 • Updated on April 9, 2020 at 8:15 pm

When Gilman Brothers, a local manufacturing company, was founded in 1897, making hospital beds was not part of the company's plan. More than 123 years later, making hospital beds was still not in the plan. Then COVID-19 hit the state of Connecticut.

"When you are called to help and you have a willing team, these are the things that you can do," said Evan Gilman, the company's third-generation manager.

Gilman Brothers has switched gears to help provide medical supplies for COVID-19 response in Connecticut.

The company usually makes foam board signs. When it became clear that COVID-19 would start impacting local businesses, the leadership team at Gilman came together to brainstorm ideas that would keep their workers employed.

"Instead of waiting for the inevitable to happen, what can we do to be a part of the solution and ensure that the families that are here at Gilman Brothers continue to stay off the unemployment line," explained Ari Luna, business development manager for the company.

Luna said that the team came up with several ideas, but the thought of making hospital beds stuck. They researched dimensions and started drawing designs. Within days the team was able to design a temporary hospital bed, completely made out of foam boards, that can be put together in minutes.

After sending the design out to several of their contacts in the manufacturing community, the state got wind of the company's capability. According to Luna, a representative from the Connecticut National Guard called them on a Saturday to learn more.

"It was definitely a need for temporary solutions and we quickly went into gear," said Luna.

That following Monday the company had already sent out the first shipment of beds. Since then, the state has ordered 3,000 beds and 3,000 partitions from the Gilman Brothers.

According to John Uliano, the company's director of operations, the material worked really well for the state. The beds are sturdy, Uliano explained, and can hold up to 600 pounds. Additionally, they are easily disinfected and take minutes to build.

"You are able to assemble the bed without having any tools," said Uliano.

The bed pieces are cut and shipped to the Connecticut National Guard. National Guard soldiers then assemble them.

As the state prepares for a surge of coronavirus patients, members of the National Guard helped to set-up a field hospital at Western Connecticut State University last week. The Gilmans were sent a video of the soldiers assembling more than 200 beds at the field hospital.

"It gave me goosebumps when I saw that video for the first time," said Gilman. "It has been a major struggle for the team to do this and do it as fast as we did, but when you see that, it makes it all worthwhile."

The team is currently working on the state's third order. They are not sure if the state will need another.

"We truly hope those beds never get used, but we are humbled to be a part of it," said Luna.

The bed-making venture is a full-circle moment for the company. It is not the first time Gilman Brothers has switched gears to help in a time of crisis. During World War II, Gilman's grandfather and great uncle stopped their regular work to manufacture comforters for U.S. soldiers.

"They always had a sense of obligation to their community and their country," said Gilman. "That is what they would be most proud of."