

STUDY TO SOLUTIONS VOL. II: EVIDENCE BASED DESIGN - AN INVESTMENT IN EXCELLENCE

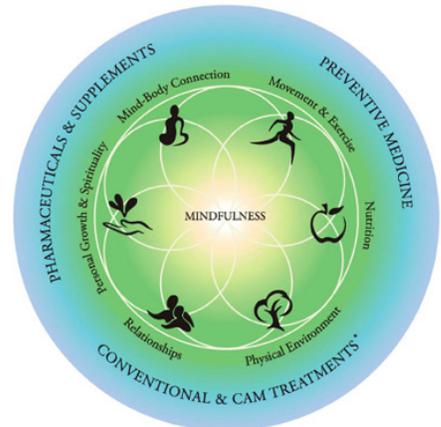
Hobbs+Black Healthcare Research Initiative

Successful Wellness Environments are created by a combination of welcoming spaces and purposeful process. Today’s outlook on patient care has changed from one of prevention to a more integrative/holistic healthy living approach such as depicted by the “Wheel of Health” graphic developed by Duke University.

Development of Wellness Environments needs to take a similar holistic approach. By examining the definitions of the words wellness and environment we can derive a definition for wellness environments as “the aggregate of social and cultural conditions including circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded that influence the life of an individual or community by aiding in the quality or state of being in good health (mental, physical, and/or emotional).”

Much has been written and discussed in regards to Evidence-Based Design in regards to the physical environment’s effect on the health of its inhabitants. Unfortunately the lessons learned are often taken out of context and used in bits and pieces to created environments that do not fully realize the potential of otherwise successful concepts. Creating a complete environment in which concepts are tied together throughout the collected individual space to form a unified whole, is at the heart of Wellness Environments. We can create better healthcare buildings by implementing individual ideas in appropriate areas, but to truly form a Wellness Environment we must provide a holistic process/building/approach model. In Jain Malkin’s book A Visual Reference for Evidence-Based Design she states, “A less stressful hospital experience is as much about people and process as it is

about the built environment. However, this has been discussed in previous chapters of this book. As well, throughout this book, research has been introduced documenting effects of the physical setting on reduction of stress. Clearly, patients are affected psychologically and physiologically by all aspects of the built environment, and this is why high-quality design must be carried into all patient care areas. It is not appropriate or equitable to have lobbies with two-story waterfalls and gardens, commissioned works of art, and beautiful lighting supported by patient care areas that resemble a 1980’s hospital. Bereft of any design detail or healing environment amenities, that would bring a measure of joy or delight to a weary or frightened patient, too many treatment areas, procedure rooms, and nursing units have suffered this fate in our newest hospitals. It was a challenge, in fact, to collect photos for this book in which design details from the lobby were extended into the “back of the house”. That term is used with tongue in cheek, of course, as nothing is more important than the spaces in which patients receive treatment and care.”



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DEFINITIONS

**Wellness:** the quality or state of being in good health especially as an actively sought goal

**Environment 1:** the circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded

**2 a:** the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors (as climate, soil, and living things) that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival **b:** the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community

## Wellness Environments: More than a Spa Feel



It is clearly evident when one is looking at a project in which design detail is carried through the entire building (and not just provided for the elegant lobby image/ impression.) Mercy Memorial Hospital in Monroe, Michigan undertook a massive renovation and expansion program in which they essentially replaced the hospital in its present location while maintaining operations continuously thru the duration of construction. From the first discussions, it was clear that the hospital administration, staff, and patients were not looking for a redevelopment that left any portion of the facility treated as “back of the house.” While the pieces of the puzzle were put into place individually, the project was designed as a complete picture. These individual elements were each centered around the improvement of departmental operations which were then tied together as one complete project quite literally from one end of the campus to the other.



As an example, one of the elements of the project was the creation of a main street that connected a renovated North Entrance to a newly developed South Entrance. This one unified element was constructed in 5 separate phases. These phases corresponded to the development of departmental improvements, and in the end were connected seamlessly. While departmental development was discussed in individual user group meetings to focus on functional requirements, the hospital management and project team kept the bigger picture in mind. Each individual element of the project was designed with the same rigor. The aesthetic was carried from the exterior entries into the lobbies. Lobby concepts of lighting, colors, and wood accents continued in the staff support and care giving areas – and even into the operating rooms.



In order to properly analyze the impact that such a wholistic approach to the design of a Wellness Environment can have on patient care it is important to take into account process and approach, and use appropriate data as a measuring tool.

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A perfect example for such a synthesis of design and process improvement is Oakwood Southshore Medical Center (OSMC). As part of the Southshore Promise, a commitment by Oakwood Healthcare System to elevate the down river community hospital to a premier medical center, OSMC constructed its new Pavilion building as the centerpiece of this promise. The building program was essential, but not the only element to fulfilling this promise.

In 2007, while the design and construction of the hospital's new Pavilion building was underway, the OSMC leaders participated in a Service Excellence Conference with others from across the Oakwood Healthcare System to improve patient satisfaction, and employee and physician engagement. Via such workshops and diligent efforts made by the OSMC leadership, a comprehensive team infrastructure and service excellence plan was unveiled. Five multidisciplinary teams were created to organize managers and employees to align with the desired goal of service excellence.

Service Excellence discussions were incorporated into the planning process and user group meetings as well. It was essential for the success of the project that the design of the Pavilion be in harmony with the processes and procedures that would support the staff in its delivery of exceptional care. This involved the arrangement of support services at locations that improved process flow, and incorporation of/ allowance for technology new to the Oakwood Health System.

After the opening of the new facility in June of 2008 and the implementation of the following:

- > Changes to Patient and Customer Engagement
- > Corrections to behaviors that may lead to departmental issues
- > Oakwood behavioral standards
- > Developing a culture of accountability
- > Allowing zero tolerance for rudeness amongst staff and patients



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The facility improved its patient satisfaction scores from the 23rd percentile in the fourth quarter of 2007 to the 96th percentile by the fourth quarter of 2008 and has received a Press Ganey 2009 Success Story Award. All teams promoted the new Oakwood motto - Patients Come First - by supporting the core values of compassion, respect, excellence, diversity, and ownership. This exceptional improvement illustrates the effect a true Wellness Environment can have on those it serves.

While process and facility improvements can effect a change in patient care, what do you do when the slate is blank? Henry Ford Health System (HFHS) answered this question by creating a new facility in Brownstown Township, Michigan supporting new process flows, and gathering a new and eager staff.

The result is a Wellness Environment that has received awards for facility design (AIA Huron Valley 2007 Honor Award), new process implementation (2009 Press Ganey Summit Award), and Staff/Patient satisfaction (Two 2009 Press Ganey Summit award).



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The Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital Center for Health Services was developed in a community that was new for HFHS. The building was to be designed so that it showed HFHS strength and permanence, but was not lavish to the point of excess. The design was thoughtful in its layout for ease of patient circulation/way finding. The details and design aesthetic was carried throughout the facility leaving on “back of the house” spaces, and keeping patients in a comfortable setting throughout their visit. For example, a portion of the radiology department was arranged as a private Women’s Center. The planning and finishes allow for female patients to feel a sense of privacy and security during their visit, while not separating the staff into a cumbersome workflow and management set-up. The Technician core for the radiology department supports the Women’s Center simultaneously with standard testing rooms. Several rooms were sized to accommodate flow from multiple entry points allowing equipment and staff to be optimally efficient while keeping patient circulation separated as desired. This includes an x-ray room and CT scanner that can support both Radiology and ER patient flow while keeping the two distinct patient population separated.



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In moving into this area it was important for each patient visit to be the best it could be - developing a customers base that would spread the word. The facility has been a success, and has seen more than an 11% growth in a market experiencing on .4% growth. The front loading-process is noted as a major factor in this success. Upon arrival the patient is moved directly into a room equipped with stretcher where they are registered into the computer system, care is initiated by registered nurse and emergency department technician, blood is drawn, IV's started, EKG's completed, tests ordered, and even initial medications given. These Team treatment rooms were designed with adequate privacy and space to support all necessary functions including the presence of a physician in many cases. All of this helps to eliminate wait times and maintain short stay times.

This interrelationship of facility design with patient and staff process has resulted in a Wellness Environment that continues to shine - improving the satisfaction of patients, maintaining a very low staff turnover, and positively supporting the Henry Ford Health System.

These examples provide evidence that a facility designed around people, process, and place can create a Wellness Environment that can truly add to its inhabitants "quality or state of being in good health."

### STUDY TO SOLUTIONS

A Research Initiative by Hobbs+Black Associates, Inc. for the use and knowledge of healthcare providers. For more information on this subject or other Hobbs+Black Study to Solutions publications please contact Sue Stevanovic at 734.663.4189 or [sstevanovic@hobbs-black.com](mailto:ssstevanovic@hobbs-black.com)

