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October 19, 2005 | Print this page | Email this page

HOSPITALity: Surgery Center Design for People, Not Procedures

Abstract | **Article**

Currently, health systems are faced with the challenge of improving healthcare while simultaneously coping with rising costs and economic challenges. These conditions have led to the development of a business model and partnership not only to improve relationships with physicians, but also to explore a new approach to hospitality that focuses on the needs of patients, their families, and hospital staff.

In a partnership between Oakwood Health Systems, their physician participants, Visionary Enterprises Incorporated, the design team, and The Farbman Group, these goals were met through the concept of HOSPITALity on two projects the partnership undertook. They focused development of new spaces on the concept of HOSPITALity and gained maximum impact out of the built environment, with construction completed early and under budget.

Academy Journal Home

> Letter from the Editor

Planning for Change: Hospital Design Theories in Practice

Nirit Putievsky Pilosof,
MArch, McGill University
School of Architecture
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

The Peaceful Garden

Dana Pulis for James G.
Shepard, AIA, and Alan
S. Godfrey, AIA, CTA
Architects Engineers
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

A Form Full of Function: The Aesthetic of Efficiency and the Planning of German Outpatient Treatment Centers

Scott McCuen Koytek and
Georg P. Müller, top
consult köln
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

Incorporating Patient-Safe Design into the Guidelines

Kenneth N. Dickerman,
AIA, ACHA, FHF1, Leo A.
Daly Co.
Igal Nevo, MD, Center for
Patient Safety
Paul Barach, MD, MPH,
Jackson Memorial
Hospital and University of
Miami Medical School
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

New Standard of Practice for the Design of MRI Facilities

Robert Junk, AIA, and
Tobias Gilk, Junk
Architects
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

The Next Generation of Operating Rooms

Naresh S. Mathur, AIA,
HKS Inc.
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

Small and Rural Hospitals: Critical



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Hospital: an institution in which sick or injured persons are given medical or surgical attention.

Hospitality: hospitable reception, treatment, quality, or disposition.

HOSPITALity: hospitable reception, treatment, quality, or disposition in an institution in which sick or injured persons are given medical or surgical attention.

Currently, health systems are faced with the challenge of improving healthcare while simultaneously coping with rising costs and economic challenges. These conditions have led to the development of a business model and partnership not only to improve relationships with physicians, but also to explore a new approach to hospitality that focuses on the needs of patients, their families, and hospital staff.

Oakwood Health Systems embarked on such a partnership with their physician participants and surgical provider, Visionary Enterprises Incorporated (VEI). Together, they developed a medical model for the Dearborn Medical Building and the Southshore Ambulatory Surgical Center, both located in Michigan.



Left: Southshore Surgery Center Exterior
Right: Dearborn Medical Building Exterior

It was determined that the business model could be best brought to fruition by an outside developer, a specialist in real estate. Oakwood and VEI turned to The Farbman Group, who, with their multigenerational background in southeast Michigan real estate, was able to develop a financially advantageous business plan for all associated parties. It was this true entrepreneurial spirit, which was also embraced by the design team and construction manager, that brought these surgery centers to the region and allowed the development of a new approach to

Academy Journal Home

[› Letter from the Editor](#)

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Theories in Practice
Nirit Putievsky Pilosof,
MArch, McGill University
School of Architecture
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

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Dana Pulis for James G. Shepard, AIA, and Alan S. Godfrey, AIA, CTA
Architects Engineers
[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

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[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

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[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

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[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

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[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

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healthcare business partnering.

Oakwood Health Systems determined that addressing patient sensitivity and the increased demand for surgical spaces were the project's top priorities. The team determined that they needed to consider social factors associated with healing environments of patients and their families, rather than simply constructing a building with the appropriate space requirements.



Southshore Lounge

For this reason, the team researched documented criteria of the necessary elements to help alleviate the anxiety and trauma often associated with surgery and recovery. Patients linked values such as peace, friendship, privacy, and soothing with feeling well. Patients also expressed nature, water, art, home, and openness as aspects of places they associate with a feeling of wellness. All of these values were incorporated throughout Oakwood's surgery centers, addressing the needs of patients and their families.



Nurse station into room

The surgery center provides HOSPITALity-styled environments for patients and guests. Patient areas are separated from surgical/procedure spaces for several reasons. From the front door to the recovery room, patient spaces provide environments of comfort through furniture and finishes similar to those found in a hotel. This maximizes comfort and decreases anxiety of the patients, with minimal overall cost to the project. The style

impressed Sammi Hussein, senior project manager of Oakwood Health Systems: "Walking through the building, I believed it must have cost \$450-500 per square foot, due to the level of finishes and furnishings . . . One of the most beautiful buildings I have ever seen." Actual construction costs ran \$180 per square foot.

With all partners involved and supporting the concept of HOSPITALity, the team was able to accomplish its goals in a timely and cost-effective manner. The surgery center at Dearborn had a projected 12-month construction schedule, but it was

Access and Beyond

James G. Easter Jr.,
Assoc. AIA, FAAMA,
President and CEO,
Easter & Mason
Healthcare Consulting
Corp.

[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)

**HOSPITALity: Surgery
Center Design for
People, Not Procedures**

Charles A. Huber, Assoc.
AIA, Hobbs & Black
Associates Inc.
John S. Barker, AIA,
Hobbs & Black Associates
Inc.

[Abstract](#) | [Article](#)



Patient room

completed in 10 months and was under budget. Providing these spaces also served several other benefits to the hospital. The suites, such as the surgery center and others

mentioned above, now occupy much-less-expensive space than when the programs were housed in the main hospital building. Spaces freed up by moving some functions out of the main hospital also allowed the hospital to expand some much-needed inpatient functions. With the cost of facilities being only a minor portion of the overall cost of providing healthcare, about eight percent, Oakwood Health Systems decided they should still not be overlooked.



Corridor

Patient spaces are treated with soft finishes and soothing colors. Patients are given their own private rooms, a method of design different from private recovery spaces seen in other models. Once a room is assigned to a patient, it is used during preparation before surgery and as a recovery room after the

procedure is complete. This consistency allows patients to feel comfortable in the space before surgery and less anxious after the operation when they return to a familiar space. Because they do not have to adjust to a new environment, they can focus their attention on healing and recovery.

These rooms are separate from the surgical procedure spaces, so the feeling of HOSPITALity can be focused on areas where patients will spend their preparation and recovery time. This helps to lower patient anxiety in several ways. Before surgery, exposure to other patients and surgical staff is limited, helping to keep the patients' minds off their own procedures to come. It also keeps patients separated from where the procedure takes place, allowing recovering patients to focus on healing without reminders of the trauma of the procedure itself.

Separation of procedure spaces from preparation/recovery spaces allows the staff to provide HOSPITALity-styled care to

patients, focusing on individuals without distraction from other activities. These two service areas are linked through the central nurses' station, which maximizes efficiencies and avoids a complete separation of services.



Nurse station

One of the considerations of the project was that the patient is not the only one susceptible to anxiety: oftentimes, family and friends remain at the healthcare facility just as long as the patient does. Their needs were also addressed in Oakwood's plan for surgical centers. Providing the same private room for both preparation and recovery gives families a great sense of space for private interaction.

This is only one part to the holistic approach of taking care of the family as well as the patient. The waiting area for families is designed to act as a family room rather than a traditional waiting room with rows of chairs. The space is filled with groups of chairs for families to interact rather than just sit and wait. The hospitality center provides beverages for family



Waiting area

members while their loved one is in the operating room. Furniture and finishes were developed to make the space enjoyable for those waiting. This includes specialty glass, a children's play area, electronic work centers, and a fish tank. These elements were designed to ease tension and provide distractions so families could do something other than sit quietly and concentrate on the fact that they were waiting for someone to come out of surgery. A few restaurant-style booths were also provided in the waiting area, elegantly screened from the living-room seating, so families could sit down together and eat comfortably while waiting.

Families are also kept at ease while waiting because registration and waiting areas are kept separate. Families waiting for a loved one to come out of surgery do not cross paths with those being discharged. Discharged patients go from their room into a private discharge room with an exit and canopy separate from the rest of the building. This allows a more relaxed and private discharge for those patients who may feel less than their best following their surgical procedure. Separating discharged patients from families in waiting areas also limits already anxious

families from becoming more worried by seeing other post-surgery patients.

For the facility to provide a holistic approach to wellness, the quality of space could not stop at the patient and family spaces: staff spaces had to be pleasant environments as well. Even though these spaces were not developed entirely along the HOSPITALity model, the space is generous and well thought out for staff and material flow. Locker rooms are modeled after country club



Locker room

resembles a nice restaurant. The office suite integrates corporate design elements in its fit and finishes. Staff areas have a decorative hand-painted pattern flowing along the walls throughout the spaces that a patient would rarely see. The final touch was upgrading the lighting in areas often treated as staff space that patients do see. These areas incorporate the use of indirect lighting that not only provides pleasant internal spaces for employees, but also improves the experience of the patient who is often forced to stare up at harsh lights. While this challenge has been discussed before, rarely has any solution been implemented.

This fresh approach to HOSPITALity design has been so well received that it has expanded beyond the surgery center to encompass the rest of the building. Blending with existing elements of Oakwood Health Systems, the public spaces are finished in a simple, corporate style with sconce lighting and glass/clear anodized aluminum entries that lead into a variety of different suites. One of the main lobbies is enlivened by a



Employee lounge

large skylight and leads into a major diagnostic imaging center and a juice bar. The upper floors of both facilities include other suites, such as an endoscopy suite, urological center, oncology infusion clinic, breast imaging center, and fitness/wellness center. Each suite embodies the HOSPITALity concept of Oakwood Health Systems and was carried out by the designers and builders in a team effort.

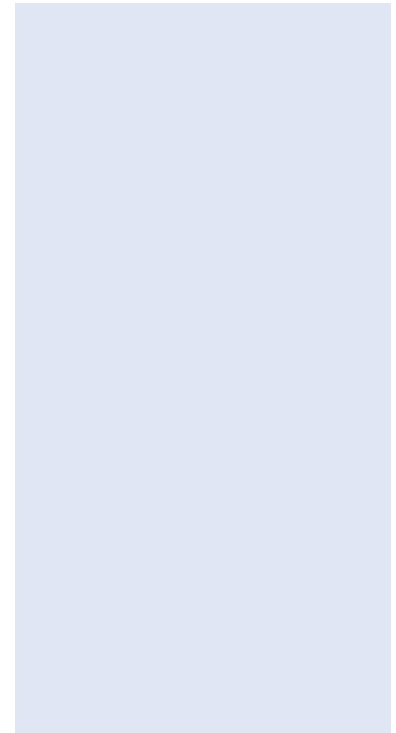
Patient and family needs were addressed in the design of HOSPITALity-styled environments. Patient areas



Elevator lobby

are separated from surgical spaces and are used during preparation and recovery, allowing familiarity to alleviate anxiety. Family needs are met by the redesign of waiting spaces,

which now resemble family rooms rather than traditional waiting rooms. Recognizing that employees are able to provide better care when working in pleasant environments, staff spaces maximize efficiency without compromising design. The partnership between Oakwood Health Systems, their physicians, VEI, the design team, and The Farbman Group focused development of new spaces on the concept of HOSPITALity and gained maximum impact out of the built environment, with construction completed early and under budget.



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