

A Place to Heal: *New ways to treat health care facilities*

Think of a clinic or hospital, and the typical picture that springs to mind may not do much for your sense of well-being.

But for many health care facilities today, that image is becoming a relic of the past. As our attitudes toward health care shift from a focus centered on treating disease to a more holistic approach to wellness, facilities are being designed — even redefined — to reflect that shift.

Architects and members of the medical community are working together to create an entirely new kind of healing environment, one that promotes the emotional, social, spiritual, and physical health of patients and their families. For instance, health care facilities are taking a cue from the hospitality industry, using gracious entrances, beautifully landscaped grounds, and light-flooded atriums to make people feel welcome and comfortable.

Beyond functioning as effectively as possible in dispensing medical services, facilities are

Philip Prouse



The hotel-like atrium at Regions Hospital in St. Paul serves as a public space and meeting place.

looking at what people really need to feel better — places to be with family, take a walk, relax with a good cup of coffee, meditate, and pray.

The new healing environment sends a reassuring message: here, people are not simply cases to be treated, but guests to be treated well.



Philip Prouse



The Regions Hospital expansion creates an innovative healing environment at an urban medical facility (above); before expansion (right).

Expanded perspectives

When a clinic or hospital builds an addition, it's a prime opportunity not just to increase square footage, but to broaden the facility's approach to healing.

At Regions Hospital in St. Paul, a 140,000 square foot expansion is designed to connect with the life and vitality of the world outside, and create a world of serenity within. Its unconventional, crescent shape allows patients to look out on a healing garden and the city beyond from their rooms. Public spaces — from intimate waiting areas to the sparkling central atrium — offer a variety of settings where people can find a moment of peace or privacy during stressful times.

The new outpatient facilities at Centegra Health Systems' medical centers in Woodstock and McHenry, Illinois have a

small-town friendliness. Each facility is anchored by a Town Square washed in natural light, where visitors can relax by a stone fireplace in comfy "living room" furniture. The Town Square adjoins the upper level of a two-story Central Park, with amenities such as children's play areas, resource libraries, and views into adjacent gardens.



Centegra Health Systems' medical center interiors have a warm, relaxed ambiance.

HEALING ELEMENTS

There has been a lot of research in recent years on how health care facility design can promote the healing process. While every facility is unique and suggests its own solutions, some of the factors the architects consider include:

COMFORT: A non-institutional, home-like, family-friendly atmosphere offsets anxiety. Providing a variety of intimate spaces gives family members privacy to connect and support one another in their own way.

POSITIVE DISTRACTIONS: Creating an environment that is visually rich and engaging, yet serene and restful, requires designing from the patient's point of view.

NATURE: Natural light, scenic views, fountains and reflecting pools, indoor plantings, gardens, aviaries, and aquariums — incorporating elements of nature — elevates and soothes the spirit.

HUMAN NATURE: Technical issues also have a human side. A warm, reassuring environment makes advanced medical equipment less intimidating. Thoughtfully planned traffic flow reduces stress to the patients and staff. Accessibility, well beyond ADA compliance, minimizes any architectural barriers to patients' comfort and the ability to communicate with caregivers.

SPIRITUALITY: Areas for celebrating, grieving, and reflecting should be designed with sensitivity to the religious and ethnic diversity of the surrounding community.

Making it better

Kids don't stop being kids when they're sick — and they feel better in an environment designed with that in mind.



George Heinrich

At United-Children's Hospital in St. Paul, each floor of the Garden View Medical Building has its own theme, complete with color scheme, special play structures, and icons for wayfinding. The *Journey* therapy area, for instance, has a fish icon that makes its "journey to health" from the waiting room to the rehab pool.

The design for Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare is inspired by neighborhood parks. The rehabilitation department, with its activity equipment, is the "playground," the clinic spaces a "pathway," and the inpatient area, the "healing garden."

At United-Children's Hospital, imaginative play structures provide positive distractions for patients and their siblings.

Philip Prouse



Kids sleep under the stars at Regions.

The pediatric unit at Regions Hospital also makes imaginative use of natural themes. Children can look up from their beds at a giant ceiling mural with sun and clouds. At night, the planets and stars appear, gently shifting color with the movement of a rotating light wheel.



Philip Prouse

The Woodwinds campus looks out on surrounding woods and wetlands.

The nature of healing

Built into a hillside on a 30-acre wooded preserve, the Woodwinds Medical Campus creates an extraordinarily patient-centered culture in an environment infused by natural elements.

BWBR partnered as the architect of record with design architect NBBJ on this facility, which is breaking new ground in its innovative focus on the needs of patients and their families.

CHANGE IS GOOD

New offices

Philip Prouse



Lawson Commons, BWBR's new home.

We're excited to announce that BWBR has moved to new offices at Lawson Commons in downtown St. Paul. The 23,000 square foot space is on the sixth floor of the building, which occupies the block bordered by Fifth, St. Peter, Sixth, and Wabasha, and offers spectacular views of Rice Park, Landmark Center, and the Cathedral of St. Paul.



As we apply the finishing touches to our new work space, we're also putting the finishing touches on our new website. Check it out at www.bwbr.com!

BWBR has close connections to the Lawson building — we designed it. “We were very pleased with the building when it was completed,” says C. Jay Sleiter, BWBR President and CEO. “At that time, we had no idea it would be our home one day.”

The new office is organized into “neighborhoods,” with an open floor plan that fosters teamwork and creativity. The reception and gallery areas are anchored by a stone wall that echoes the city’s nearby river bluffs. Curving walls, mobile workstations,



The stone wall in the lobby of BWBR's new office echoes the city's nearby river bluffs.

and unique accent lighting energize and organize the workspace.

We look forward to the challenges we'll face, the opportunities we'll find, the solutions we'll develop together with our clients in this new home. It is good to be here.

New website

What was BWBR up to 70 years ago? What did the local critics have to say about Lawson Commons? What should you expect as you embark on a journey to design and build a new facility? By the time you read this, an all-new www.bwbr.com should be ready for your virtual visit with the answers to these questions and more; check it out and let us know what you think!



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Lawson Commons
380 St. Peter Street
Suite 600
Saint Paul, MN
55102-1996

FIRST CLASS MAIL