Guide to Creating Healthy Environments:
Healthcare Facilities

Infection Control

Competitive Advantage

INFECTION CONTROL

Hospitals rely on monetary reimbursements to provide their patients with critical care. Hospital-acquired infections prevent hospitals from claiming these reimbursements, so they must be avoided. Patients typically contract hospital-acquired infections via the air, surfaces they touch, or in water. Infection control is essential in every healthcare environment and can significantly reduce the transmission of hospital-acquired infections. It is critical to examine the things we touch and come into contact with, now more than ever. The following strategies can reduce infection hotspots in healthcare environments.

Change how reception areas function

- Spread groups of furniture out, two to three chairs per grouping, to allow family members to sit together
- Have a funnel at check-in so contagious patients and non-contagious patients use separate routes (implement at all entries to the building)
- Send potentially contagious patients to negative pressure isolation rooms in the ED right away
- Allow patients to check-in from their vehicles and wait there until they receive a text that their provider is ready

Reduce touchpoints

- Smart glass for sign-in, paperwork, charting
- Reduce the number of doors and add wave plates
- Reduce the number of touchpoints in restrooms
- Use plastic laminate wireless charging devices
- Touchless light switches and garbage can lids
- Integrated keyboards projected onto work surface

Consider copper infused materials such as:

- Door hardware
- Cabinet pulls
- Linens
- Bedside rails
- Tray tables
- IV poles
- Countertops

New HVAC considerations/strategies

- Click to read **Kirksey's Building Systems & Technologies** research

Reduce the use of real wood

- Use wood-look furniture finishes
- Use wood-look panels in high-end spaces

Reduce the use of fabric upholstery

- Use plastic encased fabrics
- Use vinyl

Other infection control strategies:

- Small, red LED light in sinks that turns green after 20 seconds of hand washing
- Offset drains
- Reduce seams and crevices as much as possible
- Door handles with integrated hand sanitizer
- UV disinfecting lights (in ceiling or as mobile units)

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Telehealth is an increasingly popular option for patients, and unlikely to disappear anytime soon. According to The Cleveland Clinic, there has been a 1,700% increase in telehealth visits since March 2020. Healthcare providers must consider the possibility of losing existing patients to another telehealth provider and look for opportunities to bring in new clients. New differentiators in design and practice can provide a competitive advantage in the changing healthcare economy.

As people continue to be more aware of and attentive to the spread of germs or illness, there will be a renewed desire for healthcare spaces that look and feel ultra-clean. Visitors will need an environment where cleanliness and safety are visibly apparent.

Biophilic design can make spaces feel less sterile or cold, and help visitors and patients feel more at ease. An inviting space could be the difference-maker in a patient's choice of provider.

Demand for telehealth services continues to increase, consider these elements when designing a space that will encourage patients to visit:

- Square footage allocations
- Specialty furniture
- Background / Color selections
- Lighting
- Acoustics
- A/V considerations

There will be a trend toward hospitals looking more like hospitals again:

- People may avoid hospitals more than ever
- "Shiny equals clean"

For additional information please contact our Director of Healthcare Interiors:

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Contact the following Kirksey leaders for more information on designing healthy, forward-thinking environments for your specific needs:

Workplace - Randall Walker / Brian Malarkey

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Collegiate - Steve Durham

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Science & Technology (Labs, Mission Critical, & Industrial) - Brian Richard

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Sustainability & Building Programs - Colley Hodges

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Brand Integration/Graphics + Signage - Melissa Schmitz

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