

Designing for healing environments in healthcare facilities



No one looks forward to a hospital stay

First and foremost, it means you are sick or injured. Secondly, the utilitarian design of most healthcare facilities is not likely to be restful or calming.

Lack of privacy. Noise. Fluorescent lighting. These are hardly healing conditions.

Healthcare facilities boom

There is currently a global hospital-construction boom.

In the US alone, over \$200 billion is expected to be spent on healthcare construction by 2015. This estimate doesn't even include veterinary facilities – a healthcare sector that is also experiencing growth. Indeed the American Pet Products Association (APPA) has seen spending on veterinary care jump by 50 percent over the past few years.

Whether human or animal – progressive healthcare design is now paying more attention to the elements that help constitute a healing environment. Elements that will help reduce stress and create a more calming and empowering setting for patients.

Focus on light, quiet and privacy

There are many design considerations that contribute to healing environments. Three of the most consistent of these are the beneficial qualities of light, quiet and privacy.

The healing benefits of daylight, tranquility and privacy are profound in both humans and animals.

Lighting

Good lighting is critical in healthcare facilities. Some areas require bright lights; other areas, such as recuperating spaces, require softer lighting. Use louvers or Venetian blinds encased in glass to control lighting while ensuring critical hygiene standards.

Access to daylight

The healing benefits of natural light are undisputed. Effective daylighting design has significant emotional as well as economic benefits. Consider solar shading complements to exterior windows and skylights to manage daylight for optimal benefits. Aluminum louvers can better reflect lighting to act as a light shelf.

Noise reduction

Calm and tranquility are essential to recuperation and to stress-free treatment and examination. Incorporate aluminum louvers into glazing to help attenuate sound in interior and exterior doors and windows.

Privacy

Privacy provides patients with a sense of control when they may feel their most vulnerable. Windows and doors need to provide medical staff with a view into patient areas, while preserving patient's dignity. Employ louvers-within-glass for adjustable visibility. Louvers can be angled to offer completely adjustable privacy and visibility levels.

Healthcare Case Study

The Randall B. Terry, Jr. Companion Animal Veterinary Medical Center

About

In May 2011, the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine unveiled its new \$72 million companion animal medical center. The Randall B. Terry, Jr. Companion Animal Veterinary Medical Center (Terry Center) more than doubles the current size of NC State's Small Animal Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) with this new 110,000-square-foot complex that boasts 30 examination rooms, 10 surgical suites, three dedicated emergency examination rooms, an expanded intensive care unit with a patient visitation area and a specialized pharmacy. The VTH and Terry Center are now one of the largest, most technologically advanced veterinary facilities in the US.

Small Kane Webster Conley Architects of Raleigh, NC, assembled a team of nationally recognized planning and design consultants for the project including Foil Wyatt Architects & Planners of Jackson, MS, and Jova Daniels Busby of Atlanta, GA (FWAJDB) who are known for their expertise in designing many of the leading schools of veterinary medicine throughout North America.

Challenge

The team's goal was to build a veterinary medical center that focused both on patient care and healing. This included taking advantage of natural light to help facilitate animal recovery, providing a pleasant work environment for staff with adjustable vision and daylighting control capabilities, and making provision for privacy requirements. All the elements for vision and daylight control needed to be attractive, hygienic, maintenance-free and in keeping with the state-of-the-art design approach.

Solution

Unicel Architectural's Vision Control® and Vision Control® Mini were selected for primary locations around the operating suites, conference rooms, intensive care units and corridors. Vision Control® units were integrated into wooden swing doors, bypass doors, slab doors and interior hollow metal frames to allow for adjustable privacy levels.

Results

The Vision Control® cordless, hermetically sealed louvers provide flexible vision control in key areas throughout the facility. Staff can easily operate the louvers and their cord-free structure makes them easy to clean and maintain. The integrated louvers enhance the facility's interior design for a sleek and attractive privacy solution.



Team	Owner:	North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine
	Architects:	Small Kane Webster Conley with FWAJDB Architects
	Glazing Contractor:	Ernest Glass Co.
	Door Supplier:	Record and Piedmont Door
	Louvered Glazing:	Unicel Architectural