



A calming water feature, indoor gardens and a light-filled atrium at the Doylestown Health & Wellness Center make for a welcoming entrance and seating area.

## Creating Great Patient Experiences: Retail Principles and Successful Project Development

Would you rather go to a medical facility, or go shopping? Most people who aren't ill will choose the mall. Malls and stores attract shoppers by providing great shopping experiences based on comfort, convenience and service. Healthcare consumers value what all consumers value, but comfort and convenience are in short supply at most medical buildings.

By creating outpatient facilities that provide great patient experiences, hospitals can improve their competitive position, increase their share of each patient's healthcare dollars, gain word of mouth referrals and strengthen physician allegiance. Physicians appreciate the increased patient draw and the convenient environment as much as patients. This article discusses how to apply retail principles in project development. It is based on our company's extensive experience in retail development and the development of healthcare projects.

### Think Like a Retailer When Choosing Locations

Retailers want locations with visibility, easy access and lots of "traffic." Outpatient facilities need similar locations. Visibility enhances branding and name recognition, and encourages people to tell friends and family about the facility. When people see a medical building on their daily commute, they know it will be easy to find and that they can do other things before or after their visit.

### Integrate Services for "One-Stop Shopping"

Both consumers and physicians appreciate access to carefully integrated services and physician practices in a single, well-designed building. For example, Capital Health System's outpatient campus integrates primary care, a range of specialists, imaging, a surgery center, a center for sleep medicine, and the CHS Institute for Neurosciences. A variety of part-time specialists can use timeshare space

to provide an even more varied "one-stop shopping" experience.

An outpatient facility may include complementary services that increase traffic, expand brand identification, create a positive atmosphere and keep visitors occupied. The Doylestown Health & Wellness Center includes a medically-based fitness center



At Good Shepherd Health and Technology Center, a glass wall and plantings bring the outdoors in, to a comfortable and conveniently-located seating area.

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and boutique, a spa and a café. Capital Health System's ambulatory care building includes a café, a patient information center, and conference spaces used by both staff and community.

## Design a Welcoming and Accessible Environment

Layout and materials should create an atmosphere of hospitality, service and accessibility. This does not need to be more expensive, but it does require rethinking how the pieces are put together.

- **Make the building easy to navigate.** By replacing long corridors with open layouts, you can lower "navigation anxiety." Demarcate shared waiting areas with large planters or low separators to maximize visibility within the facility, so patients can see where they need to go.

Improve accessibility for patients with mobility problems by placing services like orthopedics, rehabilitation and geriatric medicine close to elevators.

- **Group related services.** Hats are sold near gloves; dishes near glassware. Retailers merchandize similar items together for buyer convenience and because one item frequently suggests a related one. Co-locating health services provides the same advantages, and also creates economies by allowing sharing of back office, storage space and break areas.
- **Create public spaces that are warm, calming and healing.** Start with a patient-friendly lobby with a single-stop reception and concierge desk. Shared waiting areas can be furnished with versatile seating arrangements. Natural materials such as stone and wood, abundant natural lighting, and water features create a calming environment. Gardens can be designed to promote healing through close association with the natural world.
- **Make sure the programming and design continue to evolve.** It's vital to continue the retail approach throughout the life of the project. Providers need to respond to both changing service lines and changing consumer demand to stay profitable.

## "I Can't Believe This is a Hospital"

Capital Health System recently broke ground on a replacement hospital, in Hopewell, NJ, being developed by Anchor Health Properties. The hospital will include a regional cancer center, a women and children's pavilion and a neuroscience center. A 300,000 square-foot medical office building will connect seamlessly to the hospital building on all floors, allowing physicians to walk directly from their offices into the hospital.

Project design was guided by the vision statement: "I can't believe this is a hospital." Project goals included rethinking the delivery of care and eliminating the institutional feel typical of other hospitals.

Anchor CEO Paula Crowley says, "We went into the project looking to create a space that would connect patients to their environment and allow them to feel invited into the building."

## Provide True Customer Service

While design is critical, program success requires a pervasive commitment to real customer service. Patients should be greeted at the reception desk and directed to a central registration facility.

Consider early, late and Saturday hours and short-term childcare during patient visits. Make it possible for patients to have services completed at the same visit at which they are prescribed by reserving some appointment slots in diagnostic and treatment services.

When the pieces come together on a medical building designed on retail principles, the results can be dramatic. While it takes creativity and commitment to create great patient experiences, it's worth the effort.

The LEED-certified facility will feature a four-story atrium, considerable natural light, and design elements including a 60 by 25-foot lobby mural, a shop catering to patients visiting the cancer center, and a cyber café. The first floor will house a cafeteria that includes outdoor seating. The new hospital will be located on a 165-acre site that has excellent visibility and access from Interstate 95.

The new hospital will open in early 2011 with 134 medical/surgical beds, 24 critical care beds, 17 pediatric beds, 50 obstetric beds, and 12 intermediate neonatal bassinets. All patient rooms will be private.

# Healthy Developments



1740 South Street. The building's entrance, lobby and other public spaces were redesigned. Building mechanicals and all finishes were upgraded.



Glass canopy at main entry to St. Elizabeth Medical Center Covington.



Bistro & retail space in lobby of SEMC Covington.

## 1740 South Street Opens

Anchor Health Properties completed the renovation of this 53,000 square foot medical office building in Central City Philadelphia, which it purchased in October 2007. The building, which had been part of the Graduate Tenet Hospital campus, was acquired by the University of Pennsylvania Health System, which then sold it to Anchor Health Properties.

Services in the building include primary care, pediatrics, dialysis, wound care, podiatry, ophthalmology and dentistry.

## SEMC Covington Groundbreaking

City and state leaders joined hospital leadership at the April 12 groundbreaking ceremony for a new outpatient center for St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Covington, Kentucky. Anchor Health Properties is developer of the 118,000-square-foot, three-story project, which will house both hospital outpatient services and physician office space.

The center, scheduled to open in mid-2009, breaks new ground by including a freestanding emergency department. The building location was selected for high visibility and easy access from the Interstate 71/75.

## Retail Principles Presented

Anchor Health Properties' CEO Paula Crowley presented on "Expanding Hospital Reach with a Focus on the Patient Experience" at the HCAP (Healthcare and Capital) '08 Conference, November 19-21, Washington, D.C.

# ABOUT ANCHOR HEALTH PROPERTIES

Anchor Health Properties was founded in 1985 as a developer of innovative retail centers. Since 1993 we have been devoted exclusively to developing exciting medical buildings that reflect our retail experience. Our projects offer positive experiences to the consumer and a competitive edge to the provider.

Anchor gives healthcare providers the ability to choose the financing option most appropriate for their situation. We are prepared to provide all development capital and to lease space to the provider in an off-balance sheet transaction. We will also give hospitals and physicians the opportunity to participate in project ownership through a wide variety of ownership structures.

Where a hospital prefers to own a project itself, Anchor will deliver its planning and development services on a fee basis, treating every project dollar as if it were from our own pocket. That is the only way we know how to do business.

If you're thinking about a project, we should talk.

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