

Prescription Strength

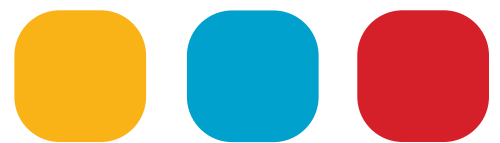


By Dana Dubbs

At Hannibal Regional Cancer Center in Hannibal, Missouri, patients receive state-of-the-art cancer care and welcome infusions of hope.

Designed by St. Louis-based architecture and interior design firm The Lawrence Group, the center is a place of spiritual uplift — a place where patients are nurtured and families encouraged to be part of their loved one's care.

The \$7.5 million, 17,800-sq.-ft. outpatient facility is a cooperative venture of Hannibal Regional Hospital and Hannibal Clinic. Opened in March 2003, it is the only specialized cancer treatment center in northeastern Missouri.



Dana Dubbs has spent more than a dozen years writing about the changing face of the workplace and its impact on people. Dana also writes for *Commercial Property News*, *Corporate Real Estate Strategies*, *Health Facilities Management*, *Operations & Fulfillment*, and the *National Urban League's Opportunity Journal*.

She is currently earning recognition as an art photographer. Her landscapes, abstracts of nature, and portraits of dolls have been exhibited in galleries and shows throughout California.

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“John Grossmeier, the CEO of the hospital, wanted this facility to represent life and hope,” says Becky Egan, project manager and senior interior designer, The Lawrence Group. “He wanted it to feel warm and comfortable, not clinical and institutional.” Grossmeier’s vision, Egan notes, influenced every aspect of the cancer center from the way the building sits on the site to the selection of furniture, fabrics, accessories, artwork, landscaping, and more.

Nature, an important component of a healing environment, plays a major role in the facility’s design. High ceilings and clerestory windows in the reception area, for

example, allow daylight to illuminate the interior of the building.

A 100-gallon fish tank is integrated into a donor wall in the main lobby. A healing garden with water features and places for meditation is located adjacent to the infusion area.

The 23-ft.-high glass wall separating the infusion area from the garden, allows patients to absorb nature’s healing properties while receiving treatments.

“We tried to make sure that all the materials were warm and inviting,

not cold,” says Egan. “We used a lot of wood. Most of the furnishings were in a natural cherry, and we had an accent of darker cherry in the wood panels in the lobby.”

The interior color palette of blues, greens, and light earth tones was also inspired by nature, as was the selection of fabrics. “A lot of the fabrics that we picked had an organic pattern to them,” notes Egan. “Everything was very flowing, organic, and natural.”

Frosted glass sconces and pendant fixtures cast soft, indirect



lighting throughout the facility, creating a general sense of warmth and well-being.

Ceiling elements including large, layered curved soffits suggest a stylized forest canopy and help diffuse light.

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One of the goals in the large, open infusion area was to help patients feel more comfortable by providing different levels of privacy. "Some people want to be secluded while they're getting treatment, yet still need to be viewed by staff," says Egan. "A lot of people want to be able to talk to other patients and gain a sense of community during treatments." Movable privacy screens accommodate both needs.

In addition to treating patients, Hannibal Regional Cancer Center seeks to involve families in a loved one's care.



A family room located off the resource center is furnished with comfortable seating and a fireplace, offering visitors a more intimate environment in which to sit, think, and relax.

To that end, the facility includes a resource library which patients and family members can use. The library is furnished with books, literature, and reference materials; equipped with PCs and internet access; and staffed with specialists who can answer visitors' questions.

Community outreach activities ranging from presentations to networking events for families are held in a large multipurpose room which also serves as a training and conference room.

Nor is the infusion area just for patients. Visitor seating and pull-up game tables in that space

accommodate family members who wish to stay while their loved ones undergo treatment.

Throughout the facility, furniture and fabrics from Steelcase and Steelcase Design Partnership companies fit the bill in terms of esthetics, function, durability, easy maintenance, infection control, and price.

"Our goal was to make sure that the owners had the best pricing," says Carole Tillman, account representative, Lincoln Office. "As a Steelcase dealer, we have access



Hannibal," says Tillman. "So, when people walk into a Hannibal clinic, they'll get the feeling that it's Hannibal."

"The word on the street is that the Hannibal Regional Cancer Center is a nice facility," says Egan.

"Other people who want to provide and design cancer centers are going there to look at everything from the architecture to the furnishings to the way the

to Amerinet which is a healthcare group purchasing organization. Our access to Amerinet gave the hospital greater buying power than they would have had on their own."

Lincoln also helped The Lawrence Group keep the project on schedule. "Lincoln did make our job easier in the fact that they took care of all the specifications, placing the orders, following up, and making sure the installation was going smoothly," says Egan. "We were working under a pretty tight time-frame, and they did an excellent

job making sure deadlines were met and that product was installed in the right place. I think all in all it was a successful project because of our partnership."

The project's owner is just as thrilled. According to Tillman, Hannibal Regional Hospital is starting to incorporate into additional new clinics some of the same furniture and fabric solutions used at the cancer center.

"They're trying to standardize on the look that was created in



center is operated. They want to use it as a base of knowledge for when they're ready to develop their own."