INTRODUCTION

In this publication of Let’s Talk Trends we’re taking a close look at A&D influences and trending innovations in the changing landscape of healthcare. With the recent onset of COVID-19, there are many unknowns, particularly in the healthcare environment. However, we acknowledge that there are also other important issues that have been the focus of improvement through ongoing research and innovation for quite some time. We will address demographic, technological, and social topics impacting the future of healthcare environments. As you read further, we’d like to get your input on how the current transformations taking place may be further affected by COVID-19. Let us know your perspective by emailing us at info@3acompositesusa.com.

The onset of rapid changes in the healthcare industry and a catalyst for many other trends is the demographic shift occurring in the U.S. today. According to Milken Institute’s report ‘Silver to Gold’, by 2040, adults 65 and older will account for more than one in five Americans, up from 15% in 2015. This increased longevity in our population affects all age groups and many industries. It is important to understand that an aging population impacts not only healthcare, but economic growth, workforce development, and societal constructs. With help from industry experts, Lynne Peer, Principal, and Jennie Griggs, Principal and Founder, at Aging Collective, we take a look at changing healthcare environments, resources in sustainable design, intergenerational communities, technological advancements and color trends.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Impact on Healthcare Environments

Understanding the impact of human longevity is becoming increasingly important when addressing schematic design and design development of future healthcare environments, as it has consequential effects on the industry as we know it today. In short, the scientific community continues to research treatments for illnesses, extending our life expectancy and changing human behaviors and abilities. Increased longevity and medical advancements positively influence our ability to engage in activities later in life that may not have been previously possible. The combination of an extended lifespan and agile population brings about a significant change in program development. Planning for healthcare environments requires a shift in thinking as to what our older generations enjoy and are able to do. After all, engaging activity and human interaction is an essential element in health and wellness. Furthermore, medical advancements have the potential to eliminate or lessen the need for certain healthcare environments altogether, simply because people may no longer need the same medical attention. For example, as we continue to advance dementia treatment, the demand for memory care may not be as great as it is today and the ways in which patients are treated will evolve as such.

Griggs explains, “From a programming perspective, the programs will have to change. A 100 year old is not going to be as interested in the programs that Architects now build for; it’s not just structural, it’s a whole different thought process.”

The success of treatments for varying illnesses also brings a shift in medical approach, moving away from treatment and towards prevention through wellness. This shift furthermore advances the program and development changes that will take place when designing healthcare facilities.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Two trends in particular remain at the forefront of social change - “Aging in Place” and Sustainable Design. These trends impact the ways in which we build for the future.

Aging in Place

‘Trend: Aging in Place’, by the Aging Collective, describes “Holistic spaces, grand-parenting and millennials are trends that encourage intergenerational community spaces, where all residents can benefit from a broad range of amenities and services. In short, these trends support Universal Design Principles, where space is ageless and designs emphasize usability for all ages.” This concept is taken and utilized remarkably in a grassroots community project by JSR Associates, Inc., “Live Together” Intergenerational Community. The community’s proposed location is the Children’s Home in Catonsville, MD, a current residential care facility for youth who have experienced abuse, neglect, violence and abandonment.
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The concept of Live Together™ is an intergenerational model that provides an opportunity for their young residents aging out of the system to become part of a “teaching and research” community focused on older adults receiving quality care and service. The model includes independent, assisted, and communal residential living options with a central engagement center. The community takes two vulnerable groups of our population that are often segregated for health and safety reasons, and gives them a place to thrive by allowing intergenerational relationships to stem and grow for the benefit and needs of both groups.

Sustainable Design
Sustainable design is a large part of social change and is quickly becoming a standard in Architecture & Design. While it is not a new initiative, implementing the practice, along with the considerations discussed previously can be a challenge. To meet those challenges a growing number of resources are becoming available, including this month’s highlight of WSP’s Future Ready Healthcare. The download takes an extensive look into the topics discussed here with highlights on existing and planned facilities, providing considerations for sustainable healthcare design and material choices.

It’s noteworthy to pose the question, how will the introduction of COVID-19 influence design and material choices moving forward?

TECHNOLOGY

Telemedicine, Telehealth and Smart Buildings
Prefabrication, smart buildings and telemedicine are of significant importance in the future because they enhance efficiency and accessibility. Healthcare facilities require specialized design and construction; as such prefabrication and modular building are an obvious trend in construction. Adopting prefabrication and modular design can expedite the decision-making process, improve quality control, and reduce waste and cost through standardization, maintained building information models and a change in overall design processes. For more on prefabrication and modular trends see our project highlight, FutureHAUS in Let’s Talk Trends: Multi-Family Housing.

As explained in ‘Trend: Aging in Place’, by the Aging Collective, “Telemedicine is defined as the process of a doctor or clinician consulting with a patient without meeting in-person. Communication occurs through a video chat or on the telephone. Patient monitoring devices for vital signs or blood glucose can transmit data automatically to the doctor. This practice allows for healthcare to come to the patient, making any living space a potential healthcare space and further facilitating ‘aging in place.’”

As digital communication has increased in response to COVID-19, we see the use of telemedicine gaining wider acceptance. The increasing use of telemedicine may have a potential effect on the necessity or current structure of clinical rooms and support spaces in primary care offices, hospitals, and senior living centers. Similarly, “telehealth” describes the wide range of diagnosis and management, education, and other related fields of healthcare using technology to enhance care. A prime example of the acceleration of telemedicine and telehealth is Change Healthcare’s new API & Services Connection™ Marketplace launched May 2020. According to Business Wire, “Change Healthcare (Nasdaq: CHNG) unveiled offerings that combine industry-standard APIs, software solutions, and hardware bundles to help telehealth platform vendors and providers rapidly deploy virtual care services.”

Another technological trend and direct influence is the rise of smart buildings. Building Design+Construction’s 2019 Giants 300 Report states, “The next big advancement: the so-called “smart hospital.” With multiple systems able to communicate with each other, such a building performs functions like another medical practitioner.”

As smart buildings become standardized over time, smart hospitals will further enhance efficiency and accessibility and promote change in the way Architects and Designers develop facilities on a structural level. Smart buildings can encompass a wide-array of technological integrations, with artificial intelligence monitoring functions such as energy efficiency, occupancy, alarm systems, access points, and patient equipment, and in turn “communicating” between functions and with medical practitioners. This significant innovation is fast approaching and should be understood by all in the architectural community.

WSP’s Gary Hamilton, Senior Vice President and Eastern Healthcare Lead states, “In five years, the occupant-aware building is going to be commonplace in healthcare.”

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Our exterior color palettes are a curation of ALUCOBOND® PLUS colors based on healthcare industry trends and research. View the new Wanderlust selection - 29 ALUCOBOND® PLUS finishes curated to inspire. This vast array of new Wanderlust colors increases 3A Composites USA offering of stocked ALUCOBOND PLUS finishes to a total of 86.

New Color Palettes

The Visionary Palette

ALUCOBOND® PLUS Cupral
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Beachstone Gray Metallic
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Galaxy Blue
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Epernay Champagne Metallic
ALUCOBOND® PLUS White Gold
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Moonstone

The Tundra Palette

ALUCOBOND® PLUS Bone White
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Arctic Frost
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Olivine Metallic
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Sierra Sand
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Beige
ALUCOBOND® PLUS Rustic Walnut

COLOR TRENDS

Shaping Wellness

Exterior trends in healthcare are largely influenced by interiors with neutral and muted tones as these colors tend to positively influence our mental state. However, the rising development of support and adaptable spaces also brings about design opportunities that clinical spaces would not normally integrate, such as patterns, saturated colors, graphics and a connection with nature. Many medical facilities have taken this opportunity to incorporate branding elements into interior and exterior spaces. Over the years it has become increasingly important for healthcare companies to define their brand through brand identity, including, tone of voice, color scheme, brand image and slogan. The rise of a brand identity has come from the need to humanize and personalize healthcare facilities and create a sense of familiarity throughout multiple locations. With this, we see a trend in support spaces reflecting brand identity through wayfinding, color schemes and thematic styles for fixtures and furniture.

Many brands have also adopted biophilic approaches as society continues to focus on wellness prevention. Biophilia has become a driving force for design, empowering architects and designers to create concepts with a human-centered approach and a focus on elements and aesthetics from earth’s natural surroundings. Biophilic design can reduce stress, improve cognitive function, and enhance mood and creativity. The transformation from past to future will embody a balance of traditional design and new-age flare.

Healthcare exteriors are picking up where interiors leave off, with bold design statements found in outdoor structures and central art pieces, vibrant facades that induce optimism, and unique shapes and fabrications that break from mundane surrounding architectures. A significant element
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Taking shape is the incorporation of natural light. Suntuitive reports, “According to recent studies, patients in naturally well-lit rooms actually heal faster and require a shorter hospital stay than patients without proper exposure to natural light.”

The significance of natural light is important and begins with good exterior design. Our recently published Application Guide about perforated ALUCOBOND® PLUS panels explores the use of perforation in exterior design and provides guidelines for fabrication. Perforated material allows for greater natural light while adding dimension to building exteriors. Color forecasts indicate whites, subtle neutrals and color-shifting panels, alongside contrasting colors are a great way to enliven the exterior facade. Adding exterior dimension through contrasting textures and finishes is a trend which has gained popularity in other markets such as mixed-use, commercial and public spaces, and is now making its way to the healthcare sector. Utilizing mica or metallic finishes with solid or color-shifting finishes allows surfaces to pop in various lighting conditions. ALUCOBOND PLUS offers a variety of finishes to enhance exterior concepts, see all 88 stock finishes in our new Color Library.

Exemplifying exterior trends is the new Esperanza Brighton Park Health Center (pictured right) in Brighton Park, Chicago built by Esperanza Health Centers, a federally-qualified nonprofit health center, in partnership with social service nonprofit Mujeres Latinas en Acción. Architect Juan Moreno designed a futuristic perspective to the center as it moves away from sterile and embodies wellness. Moreno included large windows and revealing walkways in public spaces and placed windows up-high in clinical rooms to protect privacy while allowing light to enter. Utilizing ALUCOBOND PLUS Cupral, the exterior of Esperanza Brighton Park Health Center celebrates natural light and warmth, as the transitional deep orange finish changes hue with the change of sunlight and viewing angle. East Coast Metal System fabricated the exterior cladding with almost 1,100 panels covering 10,885 square feet. Cupral is part of the Spectra Collection - finishes inspired from naturally occurring elements and the luster and sheen found in modern metals.

SUMMARY

The state of the healthcare industry is transforming before our eyes. The architectural community has a responsibility to understand and embrace these changes to better the healthcare environments for the future. As we continue to build for a shifting demographic in a post COVID-19 world, we must discuss significant changes in program development and structural design that take into consideration support spaces, wellness, intergenerational communities, sustainability, smart buildings and virtual care services. While meeting evolving program and developmental needs, color trends will not take a back seat. Designers support healthcare treatments through the use of colors, shapes and natural lighting and give life to the reality of wellness, which are of great importance now more than ever.

Esperanza Health Center
Chicago, IL

ALUCOBOND PLUS
10,885 sf of 4mm: including 9,610 sf of Cupral and 1,275 sf of Platinum Mica

Architect
JGMA, Ltd

Fabricator
East Coast Metal Systems

General Contractor
Skender Construction

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Submit your comments on Let’s Talk Trends to info@3acompositesusa.com. Please be aware that comments may be published anonymously.

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