



Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula



Forty years ago, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula established furniture standards to complement its natural, minimalist interiors. Those standards, which include Action Office Series 1 workstations, Ergon chairs, and healthcare carts are still in use, still functional, and still progressive-looking after four decades.

**HEALTHCARE;
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

Topic:
*Change
Efficiency
Health*

Application:
*Healthcare: Administrative Areas
Healthcare: Caregiver
Work Environments
Healthcare: Emergency
Healthcare: Patient Care
Healthcare: Pharmacy*

Project Scope:
600,000 square feet

Herman Miller Product:
*Action Office® System
Aeron® Chairs
Eames® Molded Plywood Chairs
Ergon 3® Chairs
Meridian® Pedestals
Co/Struc® System
Ethospace® Nurses' Station
Procedure/Supply Carts*

Year Completed:
Ongoing



Surrounded by some of the most breathtaking scenery in central California, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula is known for striking architecture that blends into the natural environment. From the beginning, the hospital carefully chose furniture standards that would be durable and flexible with a clean, uncluttered aesthetic. After 40 years, those standards still look fresh and progressive, and they enable the hospital to respond to change on a dime.

Designed by renowned architect Edward Durrell Stone in the early 1960s, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula is a low, horizontal structure with 8-foot overhangs, skylights, and a dome-covered, 40-foot koi pond. Large windows in patient rooms and in public areas overlook the courtyard, the gardens, the pond, and the Del Monte Forest. Surrounded by such natural beauty, the interior environment is serene and calming—an approach to healing that was progressive for its time.

From the beginning, the hospital chose standards for everything from carpets to wall colors. Furniture throughout the facility, for example, was chosen for quality, durability, ease of change, and design excellence. Despite revolutionary changes in healthcare over the years, the hospital has seen no need to revisit its original standards. “We still only allow three paint colors on the wall,” says Frederick Bensch, director, Facilities Planning. “We reuse furniture that’s decades old.”

One result of thoughtful standardization has been an extraordinary return on Community Hospital’s furniture investment. From the beginning, the hospital “looked at life-cycle costs and bought first-rate product, knowing it would last longer than cheaper product,” says Mr. Bensch. “Herman Miller is like that—it just lasts forever.”

VINTAGE PRODUCT; TIMELESS AESTHETIC

Another result of rigorous standardization is that the hospital has been able to maintain a consistent look despite major expansion projects.

Originally, Community Hospital standardized on Action Office Series 1 for clinical and administrative applications, Ergon seating, Meridian pedestals, and a variety of case carts.

[Left] Low, horizontal lines and 8-foot overhangs are signature features of Community Hospital, designed by renowned architect Edward Durrell Stone. Beautifully landscaped grounds blend with the Monterey pine forest that surrounds the hospital.

[Right] With an approach to healing that was progressive for its time, Community Hospital brings nature inside with large windows, natural light, and water features.



Occasionally, finishes have changed or been discontinued, but the basic standards that the hospital selected four decades ago—and even some of that original product—are still in use, and products are still supplied by Herman Miller.

[Left] Tucked behind a custom veneer façade and transaction top, Ethospace nurses' stations are the caregiver command centers throughout the hospital, blending a corporate level of function with workhorse durability.

Over the years, the hospital has added Aeron chairs, a smattering of Eames Molded Plywood chairs, and Ethospace nurses' stations in admissions and the emergency room. Co/Struc and Action Office clinical products furnish the pharmacy. Case carts, including wire carts from Eagle, a Herman Miller alliance company, are used throughout the facility.

[Right] Behind the façade, Ethospace nurses' stations in clean, white finishes allow staff to manage paperwork and patient information.

Now in the midst of a major renovation, the hospital has doubled its square footage, added 140 patient rooms, a new emergency room, cardiac care, and intensive care units, as well as support services, such as central supply and management offices. Yet, from the distinctive architectural details to the rattan furniture in the public spaces, the new space is indistinguishable from the original facility—a feature the hospital takes pride in.

"Hospitals are often a monument to the architect, not to the owner," says Frank Vitale, consultant and former facilities director at Community Hospital. "Hospitals make a mistake when they generate a 'new' and an 'old' with very little continuity between them. At Community Hospital the buildings are seamless, and the standards are timeless."


RESPONDING TO CHANGE; MANAGING INVENTORY

Aesthetic continuity is one advantage of standardization, but limiting the sheer number of sizes and finishes used in the facility also streamlines inventory and makes it easier to manage.

The same Action Office product in the same almond color furnishes administrative offices throughout the hospital complex as well as its satellite locations. A typical office is outfitted with a corner work surface, two four-foot returns, a pedestal file, keyboard tray, and flipper door units. All the product needed to service the hospital and its satellite offices is neatly stored and categorized in a nearby 8,000-foot warehouse.

The hospital contracts with LaMar Associates, Inc. to manage the warehouse and to move and install the product. This arrangement allows the hospital not only to save 25 to 50 percent on labor costs, but also to respond quickly to change. "We manage around 30 to 40 moves a month with one employee and one designer," says Lynn LaMar, principal. We can respond to change requests within hours." Such responsive service also contributes to employee satisfaction, according to Mr. Bensch.

The paradox is that, in addition to a return on investment that is off the charts, the hospital retains a timelessly modern look that has in no way hampered its ability to embrace new approaches to technology and healthcare. "We had the advantage of a CEO with the vision and authority to make this happen," says Mr. Bensch, "and we've continued to demonstrate the value of it."

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