

Herman Miller Partners with Leading Architects to Tackle Healthcare Inequality

From layouts to furniture, a brand-new medical facility paves the way on designing welcoming spaces for underserved communities

MCKINNEY, Texas, Feb. 18, 2021 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- For some families across the United States, quality medical care—whether for a routine checkup or a serious injury—can be hard to come by. But when a new healthcare facility for an underserved community is opened, providing a space for services is just the beginning. In addition to facilitating quality care, the experience must be designed in a way that reduces anxiety and confronts the preexisting negative perceptions many underserved individuals may have about healthcare.

Herman Miller (NASDAQ: [MLHR](#)), along with leading architects from MASS Design Group, SmithGroup, Corgan, and Kimley-Horn, and teams from KDC, Rogers-O'Brien Construction, Cross Engineering Consultants, and L.A. Fuess Partners, were tasked with this challenge as they worked with the North Texas Family Health Foundation to build the community of McKinney, Texas a facility that exuded respect, quality, and a commitment to serving every individual equally.

The North Texas Family Health Foundation was founded with a goal of ensuring that every member of the community has access to essential primary healthcare and a medical home. The Foundation's first project, Family Health Center on Virginia, has created a new model that fundamentally reimagines how to provide primary care resources for the underserved. By raising local funds to build the new facility and cover start-up costs, the Foundation and their partners are supporting the creation of a sustainable community resource.

"We wanted to make primary care available to everyone in the community, regardless of their ability to pay. Health and wellness bolster educational achievement, positively impact employment opportunities, and support a stronger, healthier community," said Kate Perry, DrPH, MS, AICP, and Senior Vice President and Senior Director for Healthy Communities for Independent Financial, catalyst and lead donor for the project. "Beyond this, we also wanted to create a community-oriented space where everyone would feel welcome, cared for, and loved."

"The success of this project wasn't creating an efficient, safe and state of the art facility—meeting those checkpoints was the starting point," says Michelle Ossmann, PhD, MSN, and Director of Healthcare Knowledge and Insights at Herman Miller. "True success meant that, whether in the lobby, a clinical room, or exiting the building, every visitor recognizes the design of this space was centered on them."

"Our goal was to design a medical home for the community with cues both large and small that signal the space is human-centered. It should make people feel welcome and give them a sense of dignity," said David Saladik, Senior Principal with MASS Design Group and the architect of record on the project.

In the wake of the unveiling of this brand new facility, named the Family Health Center on Virginia, Herman Miller has released [a case study](#) detailing four of the key ways the experience of care was elevated to serve the community of McKinney. With over 50 years of research in healthcare environments, Herman Miller was able to help create exam spaces that encouraged comfortable, engaging interactions, and gave insight into how the design of clinical spaces can build trust between patients and clinicians.

"Details matter. Even changing something seemingly small, like expanding the size of exam rooms to accommodate visitors with companions and/or children in order to assure that families visiting the clinic of all sizes feel comfortable and able to move around, add up to make a huge difference," says Ossmann. "True medical care isn't just about solving the problem—it's about fostering trust, honesty, and confidence, and having patients leave feeling heard and at peace."

To help create a people-centric healthcare experience, Herman Miller worked with interior design firms SmithGroup and Corgan. The Herman Miller furnishings selected from the company's healthcare line offer provides comfort and support as people wait for appointments or family members. All furnishings are easy to rearrange, allowing for different types of gatherings or to support physical distancing when needed. The Corgan

design team also selected an intentional mix of vibrant and neutral colors to soothe and uplift.

Patients aren't the only people who deserve a healthcare space that feels like home. The staff lounge was designed to provide clinicians and other team members with a sense of respite. Staff can store personal items or gather for a bite to eat. Easy-to-move stools provide a place to perch and eat lunch or catch up with colleagues.

Modularity also played a big role in the design. Every space was outfitted with furniture that either clinicians or patients and their family members can easily rearrange, depending on the type of interaction they want to have. In the community spaces in the Family Health Center, furnishings include mobile tables and durable, comfortable chairs and lounge seating that allow people to circle up or spread out. In exam rooms and the dental lab, the team leveraged Mora, a casework solution that's purposefully designed to change. If the function of a space needs to shift, Mora is simple to modify, meaning the staff will avoid the need to shut down the entire building for an extensive overhaul.

Save for a few exceptions, Herman Miller was the sole casework and furniture partner for the Family Health Center. The design team created diverse settings across the facility—including clinical rooms, workspaces, and common areas—all with a consistent aesthetic and experience, and from one supplier, which eliminates unwanted variables, delays, and complexity while making replacements, redesigns, and repairs an easy phone call.

"By working with Herman Miller and WRG (A Herman Miller dealer partner), we had a streamlined, single point of contact that made all the moving parts come together more efficiently and that saved significant time and energy overall," said Perry. "A single source for communication, planning, and execution helped us more effectively meet our milestones and fully support the clinic team's successful transition to the new building."

About Herman Miller

Herman Miller is a globally recognized leader in design. Since its inception in 1905, the company's innovative, problem-solving designs and furnishings have inspired the best in people wherever they live, work, learn, heal, and play. In 2018, Herman Miller created Herman Miller Group, a purposefully selected, complementary family of brands that includes Colebrook Bosson Saunders, Design Within Reach, Geiger, HAY, Maars Living Walls, Maharam, naughtone, and Nemschoff. Guided by a shared purpose—design for the good of humankind—Herman Miller Group shapes places that matter for customers while contributing to a more equitable and sustainable future for all. For more information visit www.hermanmiller.com/about-us.

About the North Texas Family Health Foundation

The North Texas Family Health Foundation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that works to build stronger, healthier communities through strategic public-private partnerships focused on sustainable solutions. The Foundation is led by a Board of Trustees that handles strategic and fiduciary oversight to advance its mission and meet its goals of combining efforts, shared knowledge and financial resources across sectors (public, private and non-profit), governments (state and local) and individual donors in an effort to increase access to healthcare.

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