

# Designing beyond hospital walls for health & wellness

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**Evidence-based Design** has shown that the hospital's built environment can have a positive effect on health outcomes. For example, single patient rooms reduce spread of infection and medication errors, daylight and views of nature can reduce stress and shorten length of stay, and much more. How can we design beyond the hospital walls and achieve these same positive effects?



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Even though Hawaii residents are fortunate to live and work in a climate that inspires a healthy lifestyle, evidence shows we can do better.

In recent years, healthcare organizations have been increasingly expanding into the community with outpatient facilities located in shopping malls and mobile clinics. This makes healthcare more convenient and easily accessible to the general population, as well as moves costly hospital patient care outside of the hospital setting. However, this is only one piece of the solution to offer accessible healthcare as we've seen on the mainland and here in Hawaii by many of our healthcare providers. A larger opportunity with greater impact on overall health is the reinvention of the healthcare campus into a community hub that influences an overall wellness-focused lifestyle.

The hospital does not need to be a formidable tower that people visit only when sick or injured. Instead, it can be an anchor of the community where people gather for health education and wellness activities, a place where a farmer's market can be held, supplemented with healthy

cooking classes. It can have mixed-use components such as retail and restaurants. There are opportunities for partnerships with senior centers and schools for collaborative events and wellness programs. A hospital campus can become so much more than a standalone facility, but rather an integrated part of a flourishing community.

Examples of healthy communities are emerging across the country which center the live/work/play urban environment around a healthcare facility. Jackson Walk, in Jackson, Tennessee is using health and wellness as the redevelopment theme for their city, with a fitness/wellness center and primary clinic as the site's main anchor. The developers recognized the importance of making healthy choices available and redesigned the city to reduce parking, and made it walkable by adding park settings, pedestrian and bike paths. Florida Hospital is planning to develop a 172-acre mixed use planned community Health Village, which includes a medical office, research



One objective of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is to transition to a Value Based Reimbursement environment rather than reporting the quantity of the procedures performed. With the ACA's incentive to encourage wellness rather than increase the treatment of illness, the idea of prevention as a business model is beginning to connect with healthcare providers' bottom lines.

**Economically, it makes financial sense to keep people healthy.**

“A healthcare facility designed as a central wellness center has powerful potential to educate, influence and support healthier active lifestyles and a thriving community.”

– M. Murdock

and bioscience facilities, residences and retail shops. In Henderson, Nevada, there is a master plan for an integrated Health Village as a model of state-of-the art technology and environmental sustainability featuring a world-class healthcare center.

In Hawaii, there is a need to improve our lifestyle to encourage healthy living, and there are many areas that need revitalization and improvement. According to the 2013 State of Hawaii Community Health Needs Assessment, the rate of diabetes in Hawaii is projected to increase in severity due to childhood obesity. In addition, the lack of healthy diets and exercise behaviors in Hawaii largely contributes to poor cardiovascular health. Major cardiovascular diseases are the number one cause of death in Hawaii (Report Source: Hawaii Health Data Warehouse).

There are so many opportunities for healthier communities in Hawaii. And since we are lucky to live in paradise – where weather permits us to walk and bike year-round – imagine our hospitals taking part in creating more livable, walkable neighborhoods and becoming a central gathering place with a variety of

services for the surrounding community. In neighborhoods like Kakaako, where exciting redevelopment is underway, or in several local communities about to be impacted by the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, there is potential to steer positive change for integrated healthcare planning with comprehensive services. For existing healthcare campuses, there needs to be an increase in community awareness and interaction to encourage prevention, and more collaboration among community stakeholders to integrate the hospital as a place of wellness, not sickness. A wellness/fitness center or ambulatory clinic would enhance these urban neighborhoods which already combine residential, retail and commercial uses. There could be outdoor tennis/basketball courts and open green spaces, and group exercise classes located near a connecting bike path, or walking trails similar to those that meander around a facility on the west side of Oahu, or restaurants that offer local produce on their menus, inviting neighbors to socialize after participating in a health/fitness class.

Economically, financially, ethically, it makes sense to keep Hawai'i's people healthy.