



MODERN HEALTHCARE: The Top 3 Most Influential Design Trends

Healthcare remains constantly on the leading edge, driving innovation worldwide, and particularly here in Orange County where health, wellness, and quality of life are highly valued. As architects and planners, our goal is to meet that innovation head on, responding with design and programming solutions that allow medical providers to deliver the highest quality patient care. Looking ahead into the new year, we've listened to clients and surveyed our team of architects and designers to uncover the most influential design trends, helping to define modern healthcare spaces for generations to come.

Mixed-Use Healthcare Campuses

The rise of mixed-use development has been a formidable trend that continues to expand across market sectors, merging healthcare uses with retail, hospitality, office, residential, restaurant, fitness, spa, and entertainment. Today, these spaces are merging to establish 'Medtail' developments that aim to bring primary care closer to patients and communities. Similarly, the future of the healthcare campus combines wellness, community, and convenience to match the 360-degree approach to patient care adopted by modern healthcare organizations. These developments incorporate a variety of lifestyle uses that meet the short and long-term needs of patients and visitors, as well as physicians, nurses, workers, and allied health professionals.

The success of a mixed-use or 'Medtail' campus can be measured by the symbiotic relationship and resulting efficiency achieved between the different functions. A purposeful blend of uses may be focused on several facilities delivering different acuity levels of patient care – such as the incorporation of assisted senior living, skilled nursing, memory care facilities, medical office buildings, or ambulatory surgery centers on a single campus – to the addition of on-site restaurants, specialty retail, childcare, grocery, banks, and more. Understanding the nuances of each building type and how to create synergy amongst uses, AO is well equipped to design the right solutions that balances the client's vision, healthcare facility operations, community needs, and market demands.

Contextual Community Design

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, patients are relying more and more on alternative treatment centers such as urgent care, outpatient clinics, and surgery centers. These facilities are often more convenient, less costly, and safer options for patients looking to avoid crowded hospital waiting rooms. Additionally, neighborhood healthcare facilities are an attractive draw for physicians and employees who enjoy the convenience of working close to home and serving their local community. Located central to neighborhoods, these care centers welcome a new level of contextual design reflective of the community they serve. Here, we are seeing designs that focus on placemaking, complementing the neighborhood character and celebrating the community identity to offer patients a sense of belonging and familiarity.

Design Fusion of Health and Hospitality

Across all healthcare spaces, the medical community recognizes the key role that hospitality design plays in establishing spaces that are welcoming, comforting, and inviting. Long established as a key design philosophy for senior living, assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, the fusion of healthcare and hospitality design is influencing all types of medical spaces such as urgent care, ambulatory surgery centers, and particularly taking root in behavioral health facilities. Designers are transforming cold, sterile environments into soothing spaces that deliver a positive mind-body experience. Uniquely positioned to respond to this growing trend, AO's Healthcare studio collaborates with our award-winning Hospitality and Interiors studios to deliver design solutions that elevate the client and patient experience.

Celebrating nearly 50 years of delivering relationship-based architecture, design, and planning from our headquarters in Orange, CA, AO is dedicated to helping clients and communities create spaces where people and business flourish. We successfully collaborate with organizations, developers, cities, and jurisdictions, including entities such as HCAI, CDPH, and VA to bring community visions to life. We bring together the best, most creative minds in healthcare, retail, commercial, multifamily, hospitality and more to deliver dynamic mixed-use destinations.



As your trusted design partner, let AO's proven experience and diverse expertise ensure that your healthcare space thrives for generations to come.

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