



Team Collaboration

How Good Relationships Affect Patient Prognosis

Experience tells us that successful design projects result from the relationships established between clients, A/E's and contractors. These relationships are developed early and are nourished by clear communication, mutually understood expectations and a high level of trust and confidence each party has with the other. This was especially true for the new Genesys Hurley Cancer Institute, a joint venture between Genesys Health System and Hurley Medical Center of Flint, Michigan. The Institute combines the best of the Genesys and Hurley oncology programs into a single new entity.

SSOE and George W. Auch Construction took the Institute from vision to patient treatment in an aggressive, 16-month design-bid-build schedule. The project completely renovated the Institute's existing 19,863 sq. ft. facility and added a 49,000 sq. ft. expansion. The team worked closely to develop a patient- and process-friendly atmosphere where design reflects a new philosophy of care.

Dr. Linda Weller-Ferris, President of the Institute says, "From the beginning, we realized that the only way to make this project a success was to come together as a team.

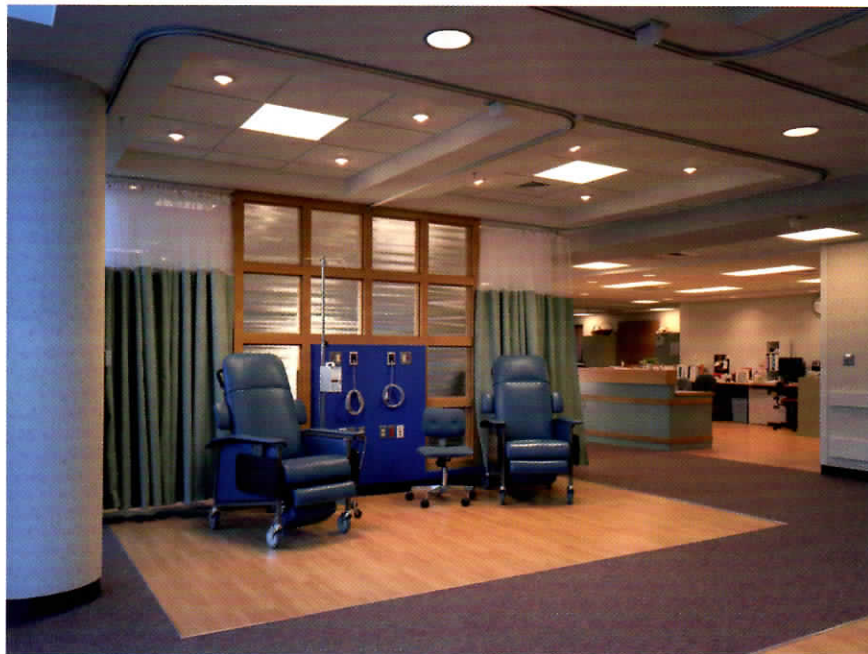
SSOE and Auch were committed to building a facility that strengthened our patients' ability to cope with their disease. SSOE worked with us to translate our philosophy of care into the physical space that reinforces it. The overall design philosophy emphasized that physical space **can** affect a patient's prognosis."

Building a relationship of trust between the Institute, SSOE and Auch was as important to schedule and budget success as were the structural steel and concrete used to construct the Center. SSOE facilitated the selection process of the construction manager early in the design

process. This allowed “real time” input for costing, phasing and prioritizing of design and construction alternatives as the schemes were developed. During several work sessions, physicians, nurses, staff and administrators were all given equal time to comment on their needs and the care process – everyone’s input mattered. Our challenge was uniting the team from Genesys, the team from Hurley and the Institute’s team, as each had their own vision for the new Center. SSOE interpreted all comments and led the teams through design choices and alternative solutions to produce a prioritized list of decisions. Value engineering efforts by the entire team focused on maintaining the quality and character of the facility while controlling cost. The result was a balance between patient and family needs and the operational efficiencies necessary for the delivery of high-quality professional health care.

The physical surrounding in which cancer treatment is delivered is crucial to a patient’s positive state-of-mind, their feelings of well-being and their sense of being well-cared-for. While the building’s exterior evokes a feeling of progressive, high-tech medical treatment, its interior reflects nurturing, comforting and compassionate care. This life-affirming environment creates an atmosphere of hope and healing and uses design elements such as stone, wood, plants, water features and natural light to deinstitutionalize the look and feel of the space.

The collaborative relationships formed during this project created the desired environment by paying close attention to the essential characteristics of a successful team: unity of purpose, trust in relationships, involvement in decisions, open communication, a supportive organizational environment and high expectations. ●



Photography by Cris Burkhalter

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Dr. Linda Weller-Ferris, President