

How Materials Enhance Wellbeing in Health Spaces

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Healthcare visits, whether planned or in an emergency, often conjure up an image of a familiar set-up: hard surfaces, cool tones and a sterile-feeling environment. Research suggests despite the focus on cleanliness and safety you might even pick up a virus on your way out the door.

One of the many lessons learned from the challenges healthcare facilities faced during the pandemic is that these environments need to work better. For spaces designed to help people heal, they can do more to increase overall wellbeing and ease the stress that often accompanies these kinds of visits.

Wellbeing goes far beyond physical health to also include mental, emotional and social health, a combination that deeply impacts our daily experiences. Although an important topic prior to the pandemic, wellness quickly became a top priority during and after it as a focus on health became more acute.

Designtex, a Steelcase brand, approaches healthcare space design holistically to make healthcare environments better – starting with healthcare furniture upholstery created to enhance clinical spaces by helping put patients in the right mindset to focus on healing. Through a variety of materials, both functional and beautiful, these material options support healthcare environments to become more welcoming experiences for the people who use them and work in them.

“Medical facilities are mostly designed to help you get physically better – but they don’t always account for the rest of you,” says Seth Starner, Advanced Explorations leader for Steelcase Health.

“By creating spaces that are warmer and more approachable, patients and loved ones can feel a little safer and more taken care of, tending to their overall wellness.”

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Infection Control

When visiting healthcare facilities, patients often bring diseases and bacteria with them that can quickly spread from one patient to another. To help with infection control, Designtex wallcoverings are designed to be cleaned and sanitized to help block germ transmission in high-touch areas. The wallcoverings come in a broad range of patterns and designs and can be customized using digital printing for wayfinding, branding or creating a more biophilia-rich environment.

Designtex designers have worked with children’s hospitals across the country to develop and implement beautiful custom patterns and wallcoverings to keep bacteria at bay and spirits more positive.

Cleaning and Maintenance

With cleaning and maintenance as top priorities for health facilities, materials must withstand continued vigorous cleaning processes and maintain durability. Crypton Epure, a recent addition to the Designtex portfolio, was designed to respond exceptionally well to regular deep cleaning. As research has shown nature is a helpful way to distract from and reduce pain, Crypton Epure is offered in several [biophilic options](#). It layers both artwork and technological techniques into coated textiles, drawing inspiration from nature itself.

For a material typically produced with chemicals, Crypton Epure is made from water with zero solvents, meaning it’s free of DMF, PFAS and antimicrobials. Crypton Epure not only helps spaces look better and helps people feel better but is also better for the planet.

“The combination of form and function is key to a well-designed space. Beauty and performance really go hand in hand,” says Sara Balderi, Designtex director of design.

Crypton Epure is Designtex’s first-to-market solvent-free, polycarbonate polyurethane

Responsive Textiles

Designtex has also explored the benefits of responsive textiles to create wellness and improve health. Results came in the form of CELLIANT® – a proprietary textile backing using CELLAIANT technology that recycles energy back to the body. While in contact with furniture upholstered with Designtex CELLIANT, benefits become apparent within minutes. CELLIANT increases local blood circulation and oxygenation to rebuild and recharge, leading to more energy, performance and comfort, as well as a more regulated body temperature.

CELLIANT backed materials are cleanable and durable. They can be paired with many different aesthetics and applicable for a variety of medical spaces, including waiting rooms, where patients and their loved ones often feel in most need of comfort and peace of mind.

The FDA has determined that CELLIANT products are medical devices that provide a wellness benefit

When chosen thoughtfully, surface materials can improve the way medical facilities impact patients’ overall wellbeing.

Learn more about the power of the healthcare environment by visiting [Designtex](#) and [Steelcase Health](#) or [connecting with a healthcare expert](#).

