

Clinical Cancer Center - Creating a Healing Environment

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ABSTRACT

SUNY Upstate Medical University recently completed the construction of a comprehensive outpatient cancer center. The clinical purpose was to provide an integrated cancer treatment facility under a single roof to promote collaborative and cross discipline treatment plans for a wide array of cancer diseases. Our patients are typically very sick people facing in most cases a life altering experience. They are typically anxious and generally fearful of the treatment experience.

Knowing this reality, the design team created a facility that was as pleasant from a patient experience as possible. Throughout the building, there is a feeling of soothing warmth and welcome from the color selection, to the art work to the healing gardens. Even within the radiation Oncology suite, the linear accelerator vaults offer a pleasant scene on the walls and ceiling. The design goal was to create an environment for healing and hope.

The new facility, which is pursuing LEED silver, integrates the notion of a calm and healing environment while implementing many sustainable elements. The infusion areas on two floors overlook a healing garden to give the patients a visual focal point while undergoing their treatment. The healing garden can be accessed so patients and visitors can enjoy an outdoor tranquil area. But the healing garden and green roofs on the building also capture rain water to reduce runoff.

Throughout the building various energy saving measures were implemented without impacting the goal of fostering a healing environment. LED lighting where possible inside and out of the building; sophisticated lighting controls throughout; energy efficient HVAC systems controllable at the room level throughout and a liberal use of recycled content materials. Even the front entrance water feature is actually a rain retention measure to divert 90 percent of the runoff from the local combined sewer system.

Achieving a balance between a healing, welcoming environment for very sick people while implementing a wide array of sustainability and energy conservation measures can be done. But it takes a concerted and integrated approach from all the stakeholders; one that must start at the inception of the project.

BIOGRAPHY

Over 37 years of design, construction and real estate development experience across several business sectors. Over his career, he has worked in the role of design professional, contractor and owner/developer prior to his current role at SUNY Upstate Medical University. Mr. Pelis currently holds the position of Assistant Vice President for Facilities and Planning at Upstate. His duties include the financial and technical management of all capital projects across the two campus university. In addition, Mr. Pelis is responsible for managing the university's facility master plan which entails forecasting potential capital investments 5-10 years or more into the future. Mr. Pelis is also Chair of the University's Sustainability Task Force. In this capacity, he leads the sustainability program at Upstate and sets direction on sustainability goals for Upstate. Pelis is also responsible for the university's parking operation which includes two campuses, three garages and about 4000 surface parking spaces. Mr. Pelis holds the position of corporate secretary for SUNY Upstate's affiliate, Upstate Properties Development, Inc. and functions as the development and operations manager for the corporation. Mr. Pelis is also deeply engaged with the university's minority and women owned supplier diversity program.

Andrew leads EwingCole's New York office and specializes in the planning and design of cancer care facilities. With 40 years of experience in all aspects of architecture and construction, he is skilled at conceiving architectural design options that depart from traditional solutions for the benefit of patient comfort and convenience, efficient delivery of care, construction cost containment, regulatory approval and engineering systems integration. Andrew has authored many articles on healthcare design and is a frequent speaker at healthcare seminars. He joined EwingCole in 1983 and served as President and CEO from 1991 to 2005.