

# Using evidence-based healthcare solutions today to meet tomorrow's changing needs

## Opinion

Current trends influencing healthcare in the U.S. today include a focus on quality, safety and satisfaction; healthcare costs and reimbursements; environmental safety; healthcare worker safety and caregiver shortages; aging population; health information and emerging technology; healthy living and wellness; decentralized healthcare, ambulatory care, and care at home; disaster preparedness and emergency department saturation; and genomics and predictive health. To document solutions to these trends, Evidence-Based Design (EBD) practices have shown that patient-centered planning and design processes based on research provide multiple benefits such as improvements in patient care, quality, safety and satisfaction, staff safety and job satisfaction, and the environment.<sup>1</sup>

## Background/Emerging trends

The population is expected to increase from an expected 1 billion people in 2030 to 1.55 billion by 2050, accounting for 17% of the world's population, with the most rapid increases occurring in developing countries.<sup>2,3</sup> In addition, the cost of healthcare continues to escalate. The U.S. spends \$2.7trillion on healthcare annually, with eighty-five percent of U.S. healthcare dollars being spent on people with chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and arthritis.<sup>1</sup> Patients, caregivers, insurance providers, the government, and healthcare providers are all seeking new solutions that are beginning to transform the industry, with three areas driving this change in particular: 1) people, 2) environment, and 3) technology. In the transition, it appears that care providers are working to provide more patient-centered care, which means that patients, families, and clinicians are all navigating new roles and relationships. For example, the healthcare system has moved from volume-based care to value-based care as mergers/acquisitions, consumer attitudes, and the U.S. Affordable Care Act affect reimbursements based on positive results and satisfying experiences. Today, healthcare participants are less willing to be passive recipients of care and are taking active control by asking more questions; expecting more information; and researching providers, costs, and treatment options. Faced with such sweeping changes, proactive healthcare organizations are looking to what and how their environments can contribute to the overall success of their organization. Those that embrace this new reality in their future strategies, decisions, cultures and spaces will be best positioned to deliver a more diverse range of care options, enabling people to take control of their personal health and work environments.<sup>4</sup>

The environment can be an integral component to enhancing the vital connections between people, place and technology.<sup>4</sup> Therefore,

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it is my goal to encourage each professional working in areas related to healthcare environments to become involved in informed decision making based on an Evidence-Based Design team approach to address and solve current issues. The need for developing innovative interdisciplinary solutions to meet the changing needs of today's problems (tomorrow's opportunities) has never been greater. It is said that many people are training today for jobs that do not yet exist. Creating a diverse, interdisciplinary blend of participants, e.g., healthcare professionals, design/architecture/engineering, marketing, sales, research, out-of-the-box thinkers, high school/college students, faculty members, insurance companies, family studies professionals, etc. to work, and research, collaboratively together to formulate new evidence-based solutions to tomorrow's healthcare needs can only result in win-win timely new solutions.

## Acknowledgements

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## Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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