

The growing interest of multi-disciplinary professions in the relationship between design and health was once again demonstrated at the Healthcare Design conference, held late last year in Washington DC, USA.

More than 3,600 delegates attended to participate in a comprehensive programme of didactic sessions and roundtable discussions. The conference's aim is to gain new knowledge and understanding of how the design of built environments directly impacts the safety, operation, clinical outcomes and financial success of healthcare facilities now and into the future.

As the movement behind an evidence-based design process gains momentum, the highlight of this year's conference was the introduction of the Evidence-Based Design Accreditation and Certification Program (EDAC) from The Center for Health Design (CHD). The scheme is set to appeal to senior administrators and operations executives, architects, interior designers, facility managers, and design/build professionals, as well as researchers, students, and educators, all of whom came together at this year's annual gathering. The goal of EDAC will be to educate and assess individuals on their understanding of how to base design decisions on available, credible evidence. Study Guide 1 was distributed during Healthcare Design 08 and is also available on the CHD's website at no charge, while Study Guides 2 and 3 are now available through purchase. An exam will be launched in April 2009 and will consist of a multiple-choice format, allowing those who pass the use of the EDAC appellation after their names so colleagues, employers and clients recognise the specific expertise. More information on EDAC is available at www.healthdesign.org/EDAC.

Icons

A new accreditation scheme for evidence-based design and a study of iconic healthcare facilities were the highlights of the Healthcare Design conference, reports *Diana Anderson*

Lessons learned

In all walks of life, icons play an important role in setting standards and benchmarks. One of the best attended educational sessions, entitled 'How the icons have fared: Lessons learned from ground-breaking hospitals' was led by D Kirk Hamilton, Francis Pitts and Don McKahan.

A number of well-known US hospital projects, such as Bronson Methodist Hospital and Boulder Community Foothills Hospital, were revisited during the presentation. Through a rigorous process for data collection, which included literature reviews, on-site visits, and interviews with the architect, clients and users, important questions about the success of these projects since opening were answered. Lesson number one was that "no one got it exactly right," indicating the need for flexibility as a critical component of groundbreaking hospital facilities.

A series of roundtable discussions allowed for a multidisciplinary focus on current hot topics, including same-handed patient room design, in addition to the ongoing debate surrounding in-board versus out-board toilet and shower locations and their impact on patients and clinicians.

Trends in intensive care unit design were highlighted in several sessions. They included presentations on two projects which have won the Society for Critical Care Medicine's (SCCM) Annual ICU Design Competition: the 2008 winner, Emory University Neurosciences ICU in Atlanta, Georgia and this year's winner, New York's Memorial Sloan Kettering Intensive Care Unit.

Student highlights

The 2007 recipients of the AIA Arthur N Tuttle Jr Graduate Fellowship in Health Facility Planning and Design had the opportunity to present their work, including one study



Hundreds of exhibitors included specialist healthcare product designers, such as Nurture



Discussions took a multidisciplinary approach



With 3,600 delegates, the conference offers some of the best networking opportunities in the sector



A diversity of events can make choosing between them hard

conducted on walkable environments in and around assisted living facilities, and an overview of design recommendations to create wellness centres for the female baby boomer population. These sessions allow students to present their research methodologies and design studies, while giving practitioners the chance to see examples of student-driven ideas.

Another student feature is the annual Student Design Charrette, hosted by the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) Academy of Architecture for Health (AAH). This year, it posed a 48-hour challenge to design a disaster-response hospital for civil or military use. Four teams from a variety of North American schools participated, including Arizona State University, Clemson University, McGill University and Virginia Tech's Washington Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC). Deployable modular units and standardised assembly analogous to the first aid kit were among the multiple solutions

developed. The McGill team's solution featured a sophisticated search-and-rescue vehicle for three imagined independent scenarios, anticipating a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, and a humanitarian catastrophe. "It is our belief that every disaster is essentially a personal one and that the key to disaster relief lies in creative approaches to individual rescue relief," stated the team in its brief.

Creating advocates

The Healthcare Design conference is growing in size, requiring attendees to carefully review the conference booklet and make their session selections, often having to compromise and choose one topic of interest over another. However, although this may be a drawback, it is also a reflection of the event's success, which also provided numerous social networking opportunities, a series of facility tours to nearby hospitals, several hundred exhibitors and three excellent keynote speakers.

Healthcare Design continues to succeed as a multidisciplinary learning event by promoting the discussion and sharing of projects and research, creating in the process advocates for its ethos, who can take ideas and concepts learned beyond the conference walls to other professionals and industries, in an ongoing effort to promote innovations and solutions in the collective goal to improve the quality of healthcare spaces.

For more information about Healthcare Design 08, please visit the conference website: www.hcd08.com.

About the conference

Healthcare Design 08 took place from 8-11 November 2008 at The Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, Washington DC. With more than 3,600 attendees making up a variety of professionals involved in the design, build, and operation of healthcare facilities, the event showcased the most current research and innovative projects related to healthcare design. The annual event is founded and produced by the Vendome Group, publishers of *Healthcare Design* magazine, and The Center for Health Design, a non-profit research and advocacy organisation, in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) Academy of Architecture for Health. Healthcare Design 09 is planned for 31 October-3 November 2009 at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center in Orlando, Florida (www.hdc09.com).