

Van Wert Health's Surgery and Inpatient Center Delivers on Improved Patient Experience

Design Collaborative's design expands community's access to care



Fort Wayne, Jan 8, 2021 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Van Wert Health treated its first patient earlier this month in its new Surgery and Inpatient Center. Approached from a patient-first mindset, the design intent was clear: create a vibrant and engaging clinical care environment for patients, family, and staff that delivers positive outcomes and improves the patient experience, while reinforcing Van Wert Health's commitment to the surrounding community. The completed space successfully delivered this and much more.

Comprised of 84,000-square-feet of expanded space, this project continues a decade-long successful partnership between Van Wert Health and Design Collaborative. When Van Wert Health recognized its existing facility was losing market share and could not support its vision for the future – primarily with surgical services and technology – the executive leadership recognized an opportunity to reclaim its prominence in the market and celebrate the excellent reputation for quality healthcare that Van Wert Health is known for in the community. Design Collaborative was engaged to identify the challenges within the existing facility and design a new expansion and master plan for the existing facility that supported the healthcare delivery and patient experience desired by Van Wert Health.

Upon completing Design Collaborative's proprietary discovery process – the Fingerprint™ Process --

with Van Wert Health's stakeholders, including board members and senior leadership, several clear design goals for the new space emerged. The new Surgery and Inpatient Center needed to:

- 1) improve patient's worlds through design
- 2) retain and attract the best providers in the industry
- 3) maintain Van Wert Health's status as an independent hospital
- 4) retain and reclaim market share
- 5) extend the quality of care and brand from other Van Wert Health facilities
- 6) stabilize operating losses due to market share and age of the facility.

The discovery process included surveys, focus groups, design charettes, and observational studies, which provided qualitative and quantitative data sources to inform design direction and decisions.

The project includes a new, two-story addition comprised of a state-of-the-art surgery center and expanded inpatient services. The surgery center includes investment in robotic surgery, and other spaces throughout are equipped with cutting-edge technological advancements -- a demonstration of Van Wert Health's commitment to the community and rarity at the rural community level. The expansion now serves all of Van Wert Health's inpatient and all necessary supporting and ancillary services, which will allow the existing facility to function in various outpatient capacities for years to come. A true community resource, various community-oriented spaces were integrated into the design, which used light, landscaping, and technology to reinforce healthcare delivery competence and credibility for patients. Space was also intentionally designed to flex for future inpatient service lines, as Van Wert Health seeks to continue its investment in the Van Wert community.

Van Wert Health decided early in the process they wanted to demonstrate their commitment to the community and make a strong investment in the area with a positive impact, and robotic technology was one approach to delivering best-in-class healthcare to Van Wert-area patients. Design Collaborative partnered with Mitchell Planning – a healthcare equipment planner – to design and procure the highly-specialized robotic and other equipment and infrastructure needed to deliver precise surgical procedures for positive patient outcomes. Integrated early in the design process, the design team specified industry-leading technology solutions that support optimum patient care and improve patient experiences.

Other Design Collaborative-Van Wert Health projects completed over the past ten years include a new emergency department, medical office building (MOB) renovations, imaging department renovation, cardiopulmonary renovation, HVAC replacement, various studies and facility assessments, surgery suite pressure study, master plan study, and the North Outpatient Center that opened in 2018. The Outpatient Center – a new freestanding facility – now serves as a community-based treatment center for areas not as readily accessible to the main hospital. With MRI and other imaging capabilities, it serves to support the greater Van Wert community and has also generated increased patient volume for the hospital and the new Surgery and Inpatient Center.

“Working with Van Wert Health on this project has been a career-defining journey,” stated Mike Niezer, RA, associate partner and healthcare market leader for Design Collaborative. “To play a small role on a project with such great impact within the community and the patients' Van Wert serves is a rare experience for architects. We're humbled to know we've helped improve Van Wert Health's patients' worlds for years to come.”

About Design Collaborative

Focused on people-first places, [Design Collaborative](#) is an award-winning, national Top 100 A/E architectural, engineering, and interior design firm located in downtown Fort Wayne, Indiana, serving clients across education, healthcare, workplace, financial, and community markets in 14 states. Founded in 1992, the firm's mission remains to improve people's worlds through its people, passion, and process. Recently completed projects include [Skyline Tower](#), [ORNL Federal Credit Union's Corporate Office](#), [St. Rita's Medical Center Surgery Center](#), [Promenade Park](#), and [Indiana Wesleyan University's Football Stadium](#). To learn more about Design Collaborative, please visit the [website](#).

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Source : Design Collaborative

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