

Balancing Form and Function: Workstations for Improved Patient Care in a 2.2 Million Sq. Ft. Pediatric Hospital

Case Study

CXT-6031



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Introduction

One size doesn't fit all. In fact, even a variety of sizes or styles do not always yield the best fit or provide the right solution. That's why Children's Medical Center in Dallas, Texas, has built an ongoing relationship with Proximity Systems.

According to Tracy Morrison, Children's senior IT infrastructure designer, it is largely Proximity's flexibility in providing functional and aesthetic design solutions for the hospital's different departments that keeps them coming back.

Children's Medical Center, a 2.2 million sq. ft. pediatric hospital serving the greater Dallas/Fort Worth area, has more than 100 Proximity workstations, as well as 16 units in its emergency department and 40 C-ARM workstations for patient rooms in its pavilion.

"When I came here, there were a few different solutions we could have gone with, but Proximity's design team is very conscientious about the needs and requests of our different departments — they come up with really great solutions," Morrison said.

Coming Up with the Best Solution

"Whenever we're designing a space, the first questions we ask our people are, 'Where do they want the computer in the room, and how are they going to chart?'" Morrison said. "The Proximity design team meets with us, looks at the plans and brainstorms with the department, myself and the other groups that are involved to come up with the best solution."



OVERVIEW

100 workstations were installed in the 2.2 million sq. ft. pediatric hospital. The multi-compartment workstations added to its emergency department were standardized.

BENEFITS ACHIEVED

Taking their unique needs into consideration, functional and aesthetic design solutions were applied to each of the hospital's different departments.



Among the factors considered are the functional work surface needed depending on the application; ventilation to protect the hospital's IT investment; security for information, ADA requirements and codes; and aesthetics.

"I think they have the right attitude for a design team," Morrison said. "They are creative, flexible and very knowledgeable — thinking outside the box to give us different options on what works better in a given space for that department."

According to Proximity's Director of Sales and Marketing Tim Clark, the ability to work with the customer, design new solutions and then manufacture the workstations in a timely and economical manner is a distinct advantage Proximity offers, compared to companies that just distribute generic solutions with few options.

"In fact, 90% of what Proximity produces is a customized variation of an existing model in its line," Clark said.

Managing Departmental Needs

The hospital's latest request was for the new infusion unit, which called for Proximity to find a solution that fit in a tight space.

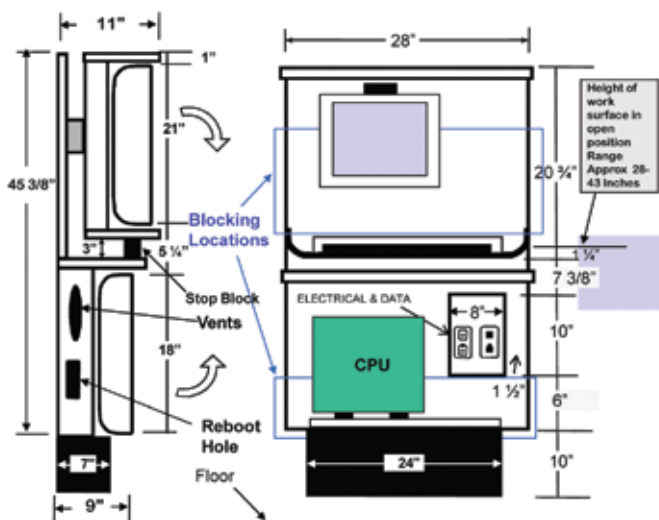
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Tracy Morrison, Children’s Senior IT Infrastructure Designer

"One of our main concerns here is we don't ever want to have our back turned to the patient," Morrison said. "And since the kids are there for extended periods of time, a lot of space is taken up by couches, chairs and things to make the room comfortable for the parents, as well as for the children."

Proximity's workstations, however, fit the bill perfectly.

"With the Proximity C-ARM workstation, the monitor and keyboard section swivels away from the unit to a position where you're actually standing in front of the patient," Morrison said, "Yet the way it's designed, you really are not taking up any more of a footprint in the room when you are using it as when you are not using it — really, really an ingenious design."



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Even Short Timeframes Not a Problem

Effective design is just one of the challenges Proximity has tackled successfully. The challenge built into another of the hospital’s project was time — or the lack of it.

“We needed to create a new start care facility for the emergency department,” Morrison said. “We had a target date for completing and were working hard to meet it. The workstations selected were developed by Proximity to meet the ADA requirements for placement in corridors and pathways. With less than a month to complete the whole project, Proximity was extremely helpful in managing the manufacturing process of the new workstations and getting them shipped.”

This quick turnaround, according to Clark, is a result of Proximity’s ability as the manufacturer to control the process and meet tight deadlines.

Adding Workflow Efficiency

When it comes to the day-to-day use of the Proximity workstations, Morrison said he has only heard positive feedback.

“The nurses like the convenience of having the CPU and monitor all in one spot and being able to walk up to it, chart and then fold it back up and be finished,” Morrison said.

The location of the workstations also helps streamline workflow. Morrison said as he was planning a re-cabling project in the ER, he was able to add four “touch-down” workstations in the hallways for doctors to put their things down, chart quickly and move on without being in the heavy activity area of the nurse’s station.

“We’ve created touch-down locations in the corridors, where the doctors can do their charting away from the other work areas,” Morrison said. “It gives the doctors access to a computer without needing to interrupt work in the nurses’ station. It’s a win-win for both groups.”

The Proximity workstations used in these touch-down areas are multi-compartment workstations designed and installed to meet ADA requirements, which, Morrison said, the hospital plans on making the standard to add efficiency to its ongoing expansion.

“By making the already-approved Proximity Systems workstations our hospital standard, when we have new construction we won’t have issues with the joint commission and life safety inspections since they already meet all ADA requirements,” Morrison said.

Advice for Hospitals

When asked for his advice he would give to other hospitals doing new construction or just considering options to improve workflow, Morrison comes back to the Proximity design team.

“I would definitely suggest other hospitals consider using Proximity workstations, but I would also say go ahead and utilize their design staff,” Morrison said. “For us, they’ve really come up with some innovative ideas. They are there to help and can make a project go smoothly.”



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