



A Space for Every Moment of Care: Designing for Choice and Comfort at AdventHealth Minneola

Project Challenges

Designing AdventHealth Minneola required addressing a unique set of challenges through thoughtful planning and durable, long-term solutions:

- Support patients, families, and care teams across a wide range of emotional and physical needs.
- Design waiting areas that balance privacy and visibility while accommodating extended stays and varying user preferences.
- Provide a variety of seating options that support choice, comfort, and flexibility within shared spaces.
- Meet strict infection control and cleaning requirements across all public and clinical environments.
- Select materials and furnishings that withstand continuous use without compromising the warmth and familiarity of the space.

Kwalu Solutions

To support both performance and human experience, Kwalu provided furniture solutions that:

- Create a unified aesthetic throughout the existing facility and memory care unit.
- Withstand continuous daily use, including impact from wheelchairs, walkers, and frequent movement.

- Maintain a residential look and feel while meeting the durability and cleanability requirements of a senior living environment.
- Align with project budget and timeline goals through close collaboration with the design team, ensuring quality was maintained without compromise.



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Ashleigh Pfluger
Interior Designer and Project Lead for
Furniture and Artwork Coordination

Expanding Care Within a Growing Community

Located in the rapidly expanding community of Minneola, Florida, AdventHealth Minneola was designed to serve a growing population.

Developed as an 80-bed inpatient hospital, the facility responds to both immediate healthcare needs and long-term community growth. Surrounded by rolling hills and lakes, the setting offers a unique backdrop that reinforces a strong sense of place.

Ashleigh Pfluger, interior designer and project lead for furniture and artwork coordination, worked closely with the interior design team at Earl Swensson Associates to develop a furniture and artwork package that supported both the hospital’s operational goals and its commitment to compassionate care.

From furniture selection and artwork coordination to installation management, the design approach centered on creating an environment that felt familiar, supportive, and connected to the community it serves.

Designing for the Full Human Experience

For AdventHealth, design begins with a clear mission: extending the healing ministry of Christ.

That philosophy informed every aspect of the project, from the architecture and artwork to the furniture selections and waiting environments. The goal was not simply to create a functional hospital, but to create spaces that support healing, respite, and human connection.

“It’s a very sacred space,” Pfluger said. “You have the beginning of life and the end of life happening under the same roof.”

That understanding guided the design approach from the beginning.

Rather than focusing solely on clinical function, the team considered how the environment could support not just patients, but also the families and caregivers who spend extended time within the space. Providing areas of respite, comfort, and emotional support became central to the design vision.

Artwork also played an important role in reinforcing a sense of place. Carefully selected pieces help connect the hospital to the surrounding community, creating an environment that feels familiar rather than foreign.



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Rethinking the Waiting Experience

For Pfluger, waiting spaces deserved special attention.

Unlike clinical areas where care is actively being delivered, waiting environments often support families and loved ones during periods of uncertainty. Some visitors seek connection and conversation, while others need a quiet place to process difficult news or simply be alone with their thoughts.

“You really lose your sense of choice when you’re in the hospital,” Pfluger explained. “So how do we give some of that back?”

To address this, the design incorporates a variety of seating arrangements that allow individuals to choose how they engage with spaces. Open seating areas support group interaction, while smaller, more defined groupings create a sense of privacy without isolation.

These layered environments allow users to find a space that aligns with how they feel in the moment, supporting both connection and personal reflection.

The approach also considered users of all ages. Whether supporting grandparents, young children, close friends, or caregivers, the waiting environments were designed to offer flexibility, comfort, and choice.



Designing for Visibility and Privacy

Balancing openness with privacy was a key consideration throughout the project.

Waiting areas were designed to allow staff to maintain clear sightlines for safety and operational awareness while still offering individuals a sense of personal space. This balance was achieved through thoughtful furniture placement and spatial planning, creating zones that feel distinct without being closed off.

The result is an environment where users feel supported and secure without feeling exposed.

Furniture Designed for Daily Use

In healthcare settings, furniture must perform under constant use while supporting a wide range of user needs. At AdventHealth Minneola, this was

especially important in the main lobby, surgery waiting areas, and secondary waiting spaces, where seating is used continuously throughout the day.

“People are sitting there for long periods of time,” Pfluger noted. “It has to be comfortable, but it also has to hold up.”

Furniture selections were made with both physical comfort and long-term durability in mind. Seating needed to provide proper support for extended use while accommodating a wide range of body types and mobility levels.

At the same time, materials had to withstand rigorous cleaning protocols and constant movement from wheelchairs, walkers, and daily traffic.



“Everything came in great, looked beautiful, and went in on time. What more could you ask for?”

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Supporting Infection Control Without Sacrificing Comfort

Healthcare environments require consistent cleaning and infection prevention practices across all spaces, including public waiting areas.

“We don’t treat waiting rooms differently than clinical spaces,” Pfluger explained. “They all need to be maintained to the same standard.”

Kwalu’s high-performance furniture was selected for its ability to withstand intensive cleaning while maintaining its appearance over time. The proprietary Protea finish offers a non-porous surface that resists moisture, scratches, and impact.

At the same time, the furniture contributes to a more comfortable, non-institutional environment. The wood-look aesthetic provides a sense of familiarity that supports a more welcoming experience within a clinical setting.

Kwalu furnishings were incorporated throughout the hospital’s waiting environments, including the main lobby, surgery waiting areas, secondary waiting spaces, and café seating.



A Collaborative Partnership with Kwalu

The success of the project was supported by strong collaboration between the design team, the architect, and manufacturing partners.

With longstanding relationships in place, the team was able to move efficiently while maintaining a clear vision for the project. Kwalu's responsiveness and engagement throughout the process supported both design and performance goals.

Pfluger also values Kwalu's collaborative approach to product development. Through ongoing conversations with designers and healthcare professionals, the company regularly seeks feedback on emerging needs, product performance, and future design opportunities.

Combined with proven performance across multiple AdventHealth campuses, that responsiveness reinforced confidence in the specification process.

From Opening to Daily Use

As the hospital opened and began serving the community, the effectiveness of these design decisions became clear. Furniture was installed on time and performed as expected from day one, with no reported issues or adjustments required.

"Everything came in great, looked beautiful, and went in on time," Pfluger said. "What more could you ask for?"

For healthcare environments, where disruption can impact both staff and patients, this level of reliability is essential.

Spaces for Reflection and Healing

Beyond the public waiting areas, Kwalu furnishings were also incorporated into the hospital's chapel, a space designed for reflection, prayer, and quiet respite.

Adjacent to the chapel, a healing garden brings natural elements into the experience, creating a calming environment for patients, families, and staff.

For Pfluger, the chapel and surgery waiting areas stand out as favorite spaces within the project. The surgery waiting area features a variety of seating groupings and a nearby café, allowing visitors to choose how they spend their time during extended stays. The chapel offers a different type of support, providing a place for reflection during life's most significant moments.

Pfluger also cites the artwork package as one of the aspects of the project she is most proud of, noting how it complements the architecture while helping create a welcoming environment throughout the facility.



A Place for Care, Connection, and Respite

Beyond performance and durability, the success of AdventHealth Minneola lies in its ability to support people through some of life's most meaningful moments.

Through thoughtful design, durable materials, carefully curated artwork, and a deep understanding of human experience, the project creates an environment that supports care in every sense. The hospital is a place where care is supported. In every moment that matters.

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