



spotlight on health

Improving Quality Of Patient Care At U.S. Community Hospitals

(NAPSA)—People choose to live in small towns for many reasons: a strong sense of community, lower cost of living, privacy, close access to nature and more. However, easy access to quality health care isn't usually one of the benefits.

Many community hospitals are more than 30 years old—they're aging, isolated and dealing with financial strain.

The good news is that despite their struggles, community hospitals are working hard to improve their quality of patient care—many by improving the physical environment with new buildings and better facilities. A better physical environment has benefits to patients and staff:

- Better quality of care, lower expenses and positive effects on patient safety, and staff and physician satisfaction, according to the 2006 Rural Hospital Replacement Facility Study conducted by Stroudwater Associates.

- Improved patient experience. Because many hospitals are experiencing a growing number of out-patient visits, new facilities are being designed to make these visits more convenient for patients, doctors and staff.

- More flexible hospitals with fewer beds, more exam rooms, better diagnostic facilities and equipment, and larger waiting rooms. Patients can spend less time in the hospital and are more comfortable while they are there.



New replacement hospitals are designed to accommodate the latest medical technology.

- Expanded specialty services like cardiology or orthopedics, so that patients can receive the specialty care they need without driving to the city, and the revenue generated from these services will stay within their communities.

As hospitals replace aging facilities, they're improving design and layout in a variety of ways. Facilities might have less ground to cover between patient rooms and surgery, which decreases the chance of infection.

And new building systems—heating, ventilation and air-conditioning, for example, from companies like Trane—help provide better control and quality of indoor air, and increased energy efficiency.

To learn whether your community hospital is a candidate for a facility upgrade and about the available financing, go to www.trane.com/commercial.