



Vacaville Medical Center, Vacaville, CA

## **Vacaville Medical Center is Green and Colorful, from the Ground Up**

The floor plan for Vacaville Medical Center in Vacaville, CA, closely resembles that of other facilities constructed, owned and operated by Kaiser Permanente, the nation's largest not-for-profit health plan. The 340,000-square-foot, four-story hospital that opened in October provides 24-hour emergency services, adult inpatient medicine, private rooms, surgical services and advanced diagnostic imaging to communities in California's Napa-Solano region.

Area residents can also access specialty services in the 219,000-square-foot, attached medical office building that opened in 2008. These services range from ambulatory surgery and cardiology to oncology and urology. Together, the buildings that comprise Vacaville Medical Center represent Kaiser Permanente's commitment to the total health of its members, community, employees and physicians.

The buildings also represent a departure from other structures in the Kaiser Permanente system of healthcare facilities. "Kaiser Permanente's new templates introduce lots of color in the new construction and remodel of hospitals and medical office buildings," said Jeanine Wernecke, Kaiser Permanente project manager. The result is a medical center featuring a green, sustainable design that incorporates more than 35 colors in floor coverings, paint colors and furnishings.

At the heart of the colorful design palette is noraplan environcare™ from nora systems, Inc. In fact, according to J.J. Jang, associate with Stantec Architecture and senior designer for the Vacaville project, the design for the medical center began with the floor.

"As I develop a design, there are millions of fabrics and paint colors to choose from. But flooring options are more limited," she explained. "So, my rule of thumb is to choose the flooring first and build my palette around the colors and



patterns the floor covering offers. The more options and choices in a floor covering, the easier it is to match everything and work with a concept. That's what makes the environcare product so attractive. It offers multiple colors around which I can build a design."

Jang selected 12 of the 48 colors available in the environcare product line to create a landscape color concept that reflects the natural environment of Vacaville. "The ground floor features the golden yellow tones of the earth," she said. "The second floor incorporates the greens of grass, moss and small plants, while the third floor features colors that suggest a forest of full-grown trees. The fourth floor, which is also the top floor, introduces shades of blue representing the sky."

In addition to supporting Jang's landscape design, the floor covering also provides way finding for visitors. Jang incorporated a stepping stone pattern in corridors where the color of the "stones" recedes from light to dark as visitors approach their destination.

Jang specified noraplan environcare throughout the medical center—in patient rooms, corridors, nursing stations, treatment areas, operating suites. "I even put it in the waiting rooms located off the corridors. These areas are typically carpeted," she noted. "But, I just love the way environcare worked with everything else in the design and saw no reason to make an exception in the waiting areas. Also, using environcare in these areas means the cleaning crew no longer has to bring additional equipment into the corridors to clean carpeting."

Wernecke agreed. "The floors look great and at the same time, offer a number of performance benefits," she said. "environcare is free of PVC and does not leach toxins into the air. Nor does it need to be waxed or stripped with harsh chemicals. In addition, the rubber flooring offers better traction, is more stain resistant, improves facility acoustics and provides cushioning for nurses and staff."

**nora systems, Inc.**

9 Northeastern Blvd  
Salem, NH 03079  
Toll free: 800-332-NORA  
Phone: 603-894-1021  
Fax: 603-894-6615  
E-mail: info-us@nora.com  
Internet: www.nora.com/us

According to Wernecke, nora® floor coverings also contribute to the medical center's sustainable design. "We design buildings for the future, with room to expand and with green materials that promote the health of patients and the environment. nora products are a good match. We like that the rubber floor coverings are made from natural rubber and raw materials and are created using eco-friendly manufacturing methods. For us, that's huge."

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J.J. Jang  
Associate  
Stantec Architecture

