



Geisinger Health Systems, Danville, PA

Curing a Hospital's Flooring Ills with nora[®] Rubber Flooring

The Geisinger Health System delivers quality health care to more than two million people across Pennsylvania. Headquartered in Danville, PA, the medical system includes more than 60 facilities that encompass over three million square feet of flooring. Ultimate responsibility for maintaining that flooring and replacing it as necessary rests with Al Neuner, associate vice president of facilities operation. In that capacity, he oversees approximately 40 flooring installations each year.

Neuner first turned to nora[®] rubber flooring when he replaced tile in the lobby of a Geisinger facility in Wilkes-Barre, PA, with norament[®] grano. "At the time, the nora product was the only floor covering I could find that offered matching stairtreads to give us a unified look," he recalled. "Also, the rubber flooring was much quieter and easier to maintain."

Since then, Neuner has managed hundreds of installations that feature nora products in lobbies, patient units, surgical suites, emergency rooms, obgyn suites, stair towers and elevators. "In almost every case," he said, "the first comment I get from staff members is 'This feels really good on my feet.' I find that particularly interesting, because in many cases, we're replacing carpet."

Neuner is quick to point out that although the comfort of staff is important to him, it is not his only priority when he selects a floor covering. "Our real motivation for switching to rubber floors is the promise of longer product life – something that continues to look nice years after it is installed – and ease of maintenance," Neuner explained. "We operate in a high-traffic environment where rooms are always full and access to strip, wax and burnish floors is limited.

"The good news is, nora floors don't require those processes," he continued. "They actually save us time and eliminate the presence of harsh chemicals found in stripping and waxing products. In addition, the nora floors look nicer than the VCT and carpet they are replacing."

This is especially true in the recently renovated lobby at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville. Each day approximately 4,000 outpatients walk through the lobby. According to Neuner, success with other nora products influenced his decision to replace



the lobby's worn carpet with norament® luxor, one of the newest products in the nora portfolio, and take advantage of luxor's maintenance and durability benefits.

Neuner notes another benefit rubber introduces to the lobby and other areas of the hospital. "Highly waxed VCT tile creates a harsh glare as you look across lobbies or down corridors. With nora products, the absence of wax means much less glare, allowing you to better see floor patterns and color. Also, from a safety standpoint, shiny floors tend to make older patients nervous, because patients think the floor is wet. The shine also disturbs depth perception, making walking more difficult. Rubber floors eliminate those problems."

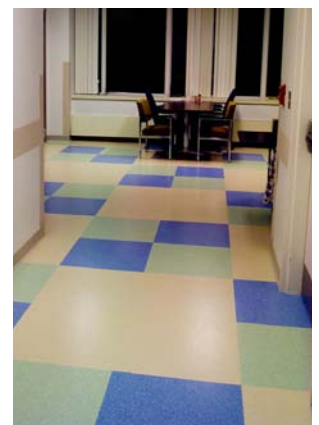
The nora portfolio of products includes a selection of more than 275 colors and textures that appeals to Neuner and designers who work with Geisinger Health System. Hailey Driscoll, designer with Francis Cauffman Foley Hoffmann Architects, Ltd., has specified nora products in Geisinger projects for more than two years. "The people at nora have worked hard to introduce lots of different textures and colors. Taken together, these options provide designers with plenty of variation and opportunities to deliver creative designs that meet the performance requirements of their clients.

"Rubber flooring also introduces acoustical benefits," she added, "and those who are in charge of maintaining floors certainly seem to like rubber's ease of maintenance." Neuner also noted the ease of rolling heavy equipment, beds and wheelchairs across the floor. "Rubber flooring has a fraction of the rolling resistance of carpet, so it's much easier to push things," he said. "Since everything in a hospital is on wheels, that's an important benefit."

According to Neuner, Geisinger Health System makes multiple flooring contracts available to him. "Even so, we're laying rubber just about every day somewhere in this system," he said. "nora products offer durability, ease of maintenance, design options and a number of performance features important to a healthcare environment. In the end, it comes down to maintaining appearance. It's not how long a product will last. It's how long it looks good and how easy it is to keep it looking good. That's what continues to drive us to nora."

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