



GLOBALCARE DESIGN FEATURES: 'WHAT YOU THINK YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE'

Backgrounder

Performance:

“I can walk into every second hospital in town and point out furniture that isn’t suitable,” says Mark Campbell, Vice President of Design at Global Group. “Two years ago, a long-term care facility bought fashionable-looking imported dining chairs that made a nice statement. Their facility manager was here recently and said, ‘We’re ready to talk to you now.’”

“At GlobalCare, we start with performance issues first, then we move on to make them fashionable and aesthetically pleasing to suit the environments they are intended for.

“There are lots of fringe players who say they will modify their product and make it into a health-care product. But, good body alignment, the scale of the furniture, incontinence, housekeeping needs – they don’t understand these issues. Unless you do, changing one or two elements won’t get you there. Effective products for health-care use have to be ‘purpose built,’ not adapted after the fact.”

Infection control:

There’s a new job description in hospitals and long-term care facilities that didn’t exist 10 years ago: Manager of Infection Control. Today, every major facility has a comprehensive program. It starts with the antibacterial gel dispensers at the front door and continues with furniture that is free of “catchalls” – pockets that trap bacteria.

The typical residential couch contains numerous catchalls. Underneath the seat cushions is decking, consisting of coils tied together that provide resiliency for the cushions. Near the arms and back, the decking eventually accumulates items such as jelly beans, cookie crumbs, lost earrings and, of course, bacteria.

Extended-care settings have incontinent patients. Given the demands on staff, diapers aren't replaced as frequently as they should be. Fluids often ooze into the catchalls.

GlobalCare furniture has ample spacing between the seat cushion and the frame, and between the seat and back. This prevents catchalls. All cushions are removable so that fluid spills can run off rather than be absorbed and spread contamination.

Further to aid in infection control and enable furniture to age gracefully, GlobalCare upholstery is available in fabric coverings with moisture-proof, anti-microbial, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, latex-free and stain-resistant options.

Seating comfort:

Getting comfortable with sitting in a chair is the first step in a patient's progression from bed to chair to discharge. Considering that hospital stays are getting shorter, patients are encouraged to get out of bed and be ambulatory as soon as possible.

GlobalCare upholstered seat backs have moulded foam with a compound curve that is concave horizontally and convex vertically, encouraging the user to sit correctly.

The typical easy chair or couch is not easy on the spine. One "sinks into" to the upholstery and slouches forward because the chair is soft and lacks lumbar support. The natural "S" curve of the spine in a standing position, with equally spaced vertebra and no pressure on the discs, deforms into a stressful "C" curve.

Young people have enough muscle mass to keep their skeletal frame in place, but elderly patients tend to assume a pretzel-like twist and experience discomfort. They may even

have difficulty breathing. They may also require caregiver assistance to exit. (It is difficult enough for an able-bodied person to exit from seating with poor lumbar support, as anyone who has been in a beanbag or sling chair, or a hammock, can attest.)

Safe entry and exit from seating:

Patients under medication may have diminished motor skills. GlobalCare seating compensates by providing a safe, secure entry and exit. Chair arms extend forward. This assists the patient to stand up by making it easy to push down on the arms and transfer weight to the arm frame.

The rear legs on GlobalCare chairs cantilever back, giving the chair a large footprint. This lowers the centre of gravity, making certain that the chair will not tip backward when the patient drops into the chair.

Wall-saver feature:

Patient lounges often have a notch in the wall where chair backs have gouged away the paint and drywall paper, exposing the wallboard gypsum. The cantilevered rear legs on GlobalCare seating prevent this damage. When the chair is pushed against the wall, the rear legs hit the baseboard first; the chair back never touches the wall. This lightens the load on maintenance, saving time and money.

Safe motion furniture:

Glider seats on hinged brackets are a popular form of motion furniture for lounges and patios. But they are dangerous to extended-care patients. These users tend to hoard items such as Kleenex or a package of crackers between the cushion and the seat frame.

Reaching for the item while the chair is moving may result in a severely injured finger. As a safe alternative, GlobalCare offers seating that provides rocking motion without using moving parts. Spring tension in the frame produces the rocking energy.

Six seat rails:

Instead of the customary four points of connection in a wood-frame chair, most GlobalCare seating has six. Extra, concealed bracing on the sides creates a more stable product. This enables GlobalCare seating to stand up to the most challenging environments, such as college dormitories.

Lag bolts:

Changes in humidity occur during the course of the year. Wood furniture tends to lose moisture in the winter and shrinks, opening joints. If the glue doesn't hold, the seating may become unstable.

GlobalCare seating uses steel corner blocks with lag bolts. When a leg becomes wobbly in response to a loss of moisture content, a few turns on the lag bolt tightens the joint and returns the chair to its original structural integrity.

GlobalCare, a division of Toronto-based Global Group, is a premier international designer, manufacturer and marketer of hospital and long-term care furniture in the value market segment. Together with office seating and systems furniture from Global Contract, GlobalCare provides a total facilities furniture solution, from patient rooms and lounges to nursing stations and private offices. Visit us at www.globaltotaloffice.com

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