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Francis Cauffman Designs MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper

October 16, 2013



MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper in Camden, New Jersey, designed by architecture firm **Francis Cauffman**, officially opened earlier this month. The four-story, \$100 million treatment center is a collaboration between The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Camden-based Cooper University Health Care.

The center is a healing environment, tailored to patient needs. Its design brings progressive outpatient cancer treatment services under one roof, including medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, gynecologic oncology, and urology. This makes it easier for interdisciplinary specialists to communicate and collaborate, resulting in a higher level of care. The multidisciplinary approach means that cancer patients benefit from the expertise and resources of an entire team of cancer specialists working collaboratively for the best possible outcomes.

The center's design reflects patient feedback, as the design team collaborated with cancer patients during the design process. The project team hosted focus groups and discussed design elements with patients, including infusion environments, patient room layout, furniture and finishes. Patients emphasized the desire to be able to have a voice in their environment when they received treatment, so designers created both private and shared infusion spaces.

The center's interior creates a calming atmosphere. A dramatic sculptural feature, the Tree of Life, welcomes patients and visitors in the lobby. This technological representation of a tree includes branches and resin cube leaves in soothing, gently shifting colors. Studies have shown that representational nature in art has positive benefits on patient outcomes. It has also been proven that color therapy affects mood: cool colors are calming, while warm colors are uplifting.

Serene, attractive plantings and flowers surround the building, including walking paths and a lush courtyard. A tranquility garden, accessed from a second-floor waiting area, offers patients and visitors a soothing, natural space to rest and relax.

The project is currently on track to receive a LEED Silver rating. Sustainable elements include furniture made from healthy, natural and recycled materials, energy efficient equipment, and low-VOC construction materials.

Image courtesy of Chris Cooper

Posted October 16th, 2013 by Valentina Palladino

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