

## PHYSICIAN



We have everything you need  
with Over 100,000 Medical Products  
from 500 Manufacturers

Visit [WilburnMedicalUSA.com](http://WilburnMedicalUSA.com)

or

Call 1-877-945-2876

## Office Set-Up Guide

Design and Equipment  
Considerations for  
Healthcare Practitioners

# HIDA

HEALTH INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION

Serving Medical Products Distributors Since 1902

# DESIGN

## Color Selection

Research indicates that consumers judge an environment within 90 seconds of initial viewing, and most of that assessment is based on color. Further, there are clinical justifications for careful color choice; evidence indicates that patients respond better to treatment when they feel the room is calming and nurturing. When selecting colors for your office, patients are less fearful of the technical diagnostic and treatment environment when cheerful, natural, or inviting colors decorate the walls. Choose paints or wallpaper prints that utilize warmer organic tones and/or soothing, mid-toned blues, greens, and lavenders.

## Furniture

Furniture in the waiting area should be of or near hotel grade, but the quantities and fabrics used will depend on your budget, space, design, and color requirements. In general, furnishings should be long-wearing and easy to care for, as upkeep will take away from your bottom line. If your patient base includes pregnant, obese or disabled patients, some armless chairs are recommended. Several end tables to hold reading material are essential, and their design should coordinate with seating choices.



# ROOM PLANNING

With real estate prices high, enhanced space efficiency is a major concern to practice managers and physicians alike. As a result, many equipment manufacturers and architects will work with you to provide more function in less space.

## Reception Billing Area

The reception area can be the key to the efficiency of the entire suite as they can serve as check-in stations, billing centers, and handle calls and scheduling. The nurse or administrator working the reception area must be able to see and supervise incoming and outgoing traffic with some degree of isolation from the waiting room in order to meet HIPAA privacy requirements. If record files are stored in the reception area, they must be hidden from the view of patients approaching the desk.

*This brochure was published by The Health Industry Distributors Association (HIDA) and sponsored by the Midmark Foundation and Welch Allyn.*

## Waiting Room

The waiting room is the first impression patients have of your office. Seating capacity and lighting must be adequate and the area should provide coat hangers and a storage area for umbrellas and hats. The overall décor should be soothing and relaxing, and reading material is a must.

Keep patients in mind when determining the furniture needs of the office. Select individual seats to avoid the problem of patients sitting only on the ends of couches and wasting valuable real estate.

## Pre-Exam Alcove

Having a dedicated space where vital signs and height/weight can be measured prior to examination can improve patient flow through your office. It is especially helpful during busy times and can significantly decrease the amount of time patients spend in the exam room. A scale, vital signs measuring device, and side chair are recommended. To minimize hands-on staff time, an automated vital signs collection device can be very useful. If you are using an EMR, connected vital signs devices are available which can send the data directly to the patient's record.

This will not only improve efficiency, but can dramatically reduce transcription errors.

## Exam/Treatment Room

When designing and planning for exam and treatment rooms, you should plan for future growth to avoid costly relocation expenses. Starting out with a little more space than you need is more practical.

Your patient mix, the procedures you perform, and your staff's preferences will determine the specific items needed in each exam room, but the vast majority of practices require the following items:

- Examination table
- Wall-mounted diagnostic system
- Medical lighting (incandescent, halogen, or fiber optic)
- Medical-grade casework with sink
- Doctor stool
- Patient/visitor side chairs
- Sharps container
- Waste cans
- "Optional" patient comfort items

**Exam table:** The exam table is the focus of both the exam and the treatment room. Exam tables come in many styles, with a wide variety of features and capabilities. Tables must be made of materials that are easy to clean and that can accommodate all patients, including pregnant women, the obese, elderly, and those with disabilities. Barrier free tables, ones that go to a very low height of 18", are preferred to accommodate nearly all of the

patient population, allowing easy access for patients, while making them feel more comfortable and secure. . And, this type of exam table helps physicians and staff by decreasing the chance of back injury and extra labor. Other features you may want to investigate, include built-in storage drawers for supplies and equipment, a hidden paper roll holder, built-in head pillows, padded foot extensions, etc.

A universal power table may be the ideal choice, especially in the treatment room, as it includes full motor-driven movement in several directions for adjustment of the lower body section, upper body section, straight up and down, and tilt. Actual type and range of movement will differ by table style and manufacturer. In addition, the table's high-low controls can help pregnant, post-op, or disabled patients on and off the chair. These tables are ideal for any type of practice.

Your budget, your procedures, and your patient base will determine the type of tables needed.

**Diagnostic System:** Most offices utilize a wall-mounted diagnostic system in each exam room. This system provides the basic instruments you will need for physical diagnosis, and generally includes the otoscope, ophthalmoscope, ear spec dispenser, blood pressure unit, and thermometer. While these instruments are all available as stand-alone products, having them together on the wall insures they will always be there when you need them, and that they will be charged-up and ready to go. This type of integrated system also provides consistency from one exam room to the next, so practitioners won't need to adjust their routines to each time they go to a different room.

**Lighting:** The exams and procedures you perform in the exam and treatment room will dictate your lighting choice. At a minimum, your lighting should be able to provide precise positioning without drifting, shadow control, and proper intensity. In a treatment room, the lighting should be of very high quality. Lights are available on stands, or can be mounted in a variety of ways. Your preference and needs will determine the range of motion you desire and your mounting requirements.

**Casework:** Casework usually is modular in nature because it allows the specialty to build an office based on individual needs, eliminating trips outside the exam or treatment room for equipment and supplies. Casework must be durable and easy to clean (inside and out), and must be made of medical-grade materials. The aesthetics of the casework also should be considered, as design has an impact on both patients and staff. In planning modular cabinets, you should first determine your instrument and supply needs. *Consulting with your medical products distributor during the planning stages is invaluable.* Modular assemblies may be arranged from floor standing or wall hanging cabinets. The storage needs and the space available will determine the style of cabinets that will be of the greatest advantage.

—continued on back



Cabinets that may be used are cupboard units for bulk storage, drawers of differing depths for active instrument and supply storage, tray units for prepared instrument arrangements, and sliding shelf units for storage of specialized equipment.

Consolidate your work area to keep everything organized and within easy reach of the doctor, nurse, or physician assistant performing the exam or procedure. The work and storage requirements of most exam rooms can be divided into the areas of active instruments, materials, and supplies; a sink area (with an appropriate depth) that is near the table; diagnostic and treatment instruments; and a consultation and dispensing area.

Pay attention to the distance between the countertops and the bottom of the upper casework so that you have enough vertical space to accommodate bulky items that may be placed on counters and wall-mounted supplies such as touchless soap and water dispensers. Likewise, consider the size of your instruments and the clearances of the cabinet drawers.

- 2-inch to 4-inch drawers accommodate anoscopes, tapes/bandages/dressings, sterilizer wraps/packs, needle holders, thermometers/sheaths, applicators, exam drapes/gowns, scissors, gloves, etc.
- 8-inch drawers accommodate bulk storage items, instruments, and supplies.
- Cupboards accommodate bulk quantities of drapes, capes, gowns, and equipment items.
- Storage also can be found in the exam table. Rear or side drawers can accommodate table paper, gowns and drapes. Foot drawers are a good place to store pap smear supplies such as scrapers, slides, fixative, lubricant, gloves, and speculums (disposable or metal).

Your cabinets should have the capacity to store enough material and supplies for at least one full day's use.

Overhead cabinets house reference materials, bulk items, and binders, while instruments are stored at eye level. Your room dimensions will determine the best cabinet arrangement.

**Stool:** Your stool must have a convenient height adjustment mechanism of some kind such as pneumatic air lift or ratchet, allowing you to move up or down depending on whether you are conducting an exam or speaking eye-to-eye with a patient. Easy swivelability and caster-assisted mobility is important for similar reasons. Stools are available with back rests, which are desirable to increase comfort and avoid fatigue while sitting. Physician stools also are available with molded seats,

form-fitting lumbar support, movable foot rests and many other ergonomic and comfort features. Study your distributors' catalogs, attend in-services, and are sure to sit on the stools yourself to understand the differences.

**Side chairs:** These should be made of medical-grade materials, to prevent staining and to facilitate cleaning.

**Sharps container:** To satisfy OSHA requirements, all medical rooms must include a sharps container. If you are short-staffed, consider more complex containers that can stack the sharps more efficiently, allowing for greater intervals between box replacement.

**Waste can(s):** Cans must be made of medical-grade materials and completely sealed on the bottom to avoid leaks, counter-weighted to prevent spills, and foot operated for infection control. You need at least two cans per room: one for regular waste and one for biohazardous waste.

## Laboratory

The in-office lab is able to provide instant in-house diagnoses, eliminating the wait for outside lab results and adding convenience for both doctor and patient. The simplest (waived testing) labs are equipped with basic rapid diagnostic tests and analyzers, some of which can be completely performed in-house and some of which require the patient to return a sample. If your client base relies on your services for primary care, you need tests that measure cholesterol, blood glucose, strep, mononucleosis, FOBT, hemoglobin, and influenza.

## Storage Facilities

Adequate storage is essential..

Here, you must strike a balance, dictated by economics, between no special facilities at all and separate rooms for storage. Your planning in this area should include not only cleaning items but coats, uniforms, office supplies, drugs, dressings, disposables, etc.

## Public Restrooms

A public restroom for patients and staff is mandatory. Extra toilets, particularly if you perform in-office urinalysis, are essential and should be near patient exam rooms.

**Your medical products distributor is in a position to advise you and to supply specific equipment needed for your office.**



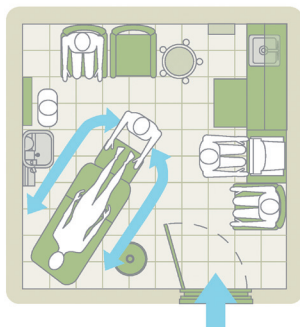
*HEALTH INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION*

*Serving Medical Products Distributors Since 1902*

# ARCHITECTURE\*



The four zones of the standard primary care exam room.



Optimal exam room size (10' x 10') and physician's flow.

## Exam Room



## Procedure Room

## Laboratory



\*Photos and drawings courtesy of **Midmark Corporation**. Copyright permission granted by **Midmark Corporation**.

Copyright ©2005: HIDA (Health Industry Distributors Association). All rights reserved. The contents of this brochure may not be reproduced by any means, in whole or in part, without prior written consent from HIDA.