



# Creating the Ideal Patient Experience

*A Plunkett Raysich Architects LLP & Miron Construction Co., Inc. Executive Brief*

## ***Creating the unexpected in health care is a thrilling but daunting challenge.***

Sustaining the unexpected, even more so. We considered it our privilege – in fact, our responsibility – to help in writing one of the most compelling chapters in the history of neuroscience medicine and healthcare construction.

Constructing a state-of-the-art building was out of the question. ***Creating a building unlike any other was the dream.*** It was also our greatest challenge, one that excited all involved, connecting us to a vision unlike any other.

Together, the design-build partnership of PRA and Miron would be different. Although our relationship spans many years, ***The Neuroscience Center project was different.*** It was designed and built from the inside out. Total collaboration from all levels at the very beginning. Our challenge was to create a unique setting in which we could accomplish four objectives:

1. Design a benchmark experience that transforms how patients feel and attaches them forever.
2. Create a working environment where employees are happy and never want to leave.
3. Reduce overall operations costs through efficiencies and sustainability.
4. Engage patients and families in seamless care delivery at the Neuroscience Group of Northeast Wisconsin.

Reinventing the patient experience was the client's goal. ***Creating the unexpected, the team mission.*** Our process was to be unique, our exploration unified. The future was ours to shape together; the unexpected, to create.



## Compelling Patient Experiences



“Are patients ever attached to a building? At Miron Construction, we realize that simply to build is not enough. For our projects to be highly innovative and supremely successful, they must transform how people feel, take their thoughts and emotions to an entirely new level.”

**David G. Voss, Jr., President**  
Miron Construction Co., Inc.

The art and science of designing ideal patient experiences is founded on the balancing of heart and mind. A decision to embark on *defining* your ideal patient experience is rooted in your vision of *creating* ideal experiences, one patient at a time. To build upon your current experience is to ensure that your legacy is taken forward into the future. The ideal patient experience in basic terms means defining and creating an unforgettable, satisfying event that is benchmarked as best in class, standardized to be repeatable and customized to be personal.

Ideal Patient Experiences are:

- **Patient-centered** - creates a connection or bond with patients on a personal and emotional level
- **Efficient** - some say lean, responsive to today’s economics
- **Effective** - after all, patients come to us for intervention
- **Sustainability** - seamless improvement, eliminates energy “waste” while enhancing green technology
- **Attached** - patients and staff, people caring for people
- **Holistic** - addresses all the senses - impacts mind, body and spirit.

What are some of the core elements of an ideal patient experience? Our research indicates that one size does not fit all. Each experience model must be a customized response to community, service and environment. However, there certainly are common elements we address through a process of facilitated innovation.

### Patient-Centered

- Exam rooms designed to accommodate all family members
- Nursing areas equipped with patient way-finding technologies
- Hospitality cafes, lending libraries and ease of access to educational pods & resources

- Private consultation rooms with-in-exam room scheduling eliminating secondary registration areas
- Process flow designed to know the patients name without ‘broadcasting’ it
- I-Spot registration areas increasing physician access by 70%
- Pre-registration process eliminating wait times, reducing check-in from 13 minutes to 35 seconds
- Think Pad registration processes connecting entire team

## Design Evidence

- Patient care process and environment mapped and aligned
- Individualized control of work environment
- Technology support timely communication - wireless, PAC access
- Collaboration areas to support care collaboration
- Off-stage/On-stage space for care providers
- Practice experience integrated into care environment
- Care environment that reduces stress for caregivers and patients
- Safe care supported by alignment of process and environment
- Work consultation space for providers enhancing communication through family integration

## Sustainable Stewardship

- Focus on reuse, recycle, renew facilities and strategies
- Integration of the nurturing touches of nature into care experience
- Facility and grounds support caregiver and patient wellness
- Technology supports care of patient and environment
- Use of renewable energy resources



“Working together, we created a culture of innovation. True to the NSG mission, we significantly improved the quality of patient care and, at the same time, reduced costs. For example, through close scrutiny of function and patient interaction, each exam room was right sized six inches smaller than originally programmed. This resulted in significant construction cost savings without compromise of quality.”

**Michael Scherbel, Partner**  
Plunkett Raysich Architects, LLP

## CASE STUDY: *Expect the Unexpected*



“Just as evidence-based medicine is revolutionizing health care, evidence-based design is transforming the health care environment. We now have, at our disposal, proven methods for improving patient outcomes, safety, attachment levels, as well as staff retention and service efficiency. Our experience-based design also resulted in improvements to clinical outcomes, economic performance, productivity and community measure.”

**Steven J. Price, M.D.**  
*Neurologist, Neuroscience Group*



### **The Neuroscience Group of Northeast Wisconsin**

The Neuroscience Group of Northeast Wisconsin quickly determined that their future success relied on their ability to create a unique neuroscience healthcare experience that linked “ideal patient experience” behaviors with facility design.

From the moment you step foot in the facility, you immediately experience a difference in delivered services through the design, flow, environment and staffing. Some of the Ideal Patient Experiences can be felt by way of: the facility’s design inside and out, wayfinding within the first four feet of walking into the building, and through the reduced patient registration waiting time from 13 minutes to 35 seconds. The courtesy hospitality area, a waiting area that is concealed from arriving patients’ sight, and a daycare area offered for patients’ children. Finally, the warm ambiance continues to welcome patients to the facility, (i.e. a fireplace within the waiting area, curved glass and high ceilings, daylighting and the high quality and comfortable furniture and fixtures), set the stage for a position and unforgettable experience.

Something also notably different in the Neuroscience experience is the way the staff approaches each patient. The staff is trained to recognize patients in a manner that is not typical - they call you by your first name and they speak to you as if they have known you for years. Often recalling information that you have told them over the course of several appointments, which makes each patient feel completely at home and at ease.

*“It’s all about employing a thoughtful, collaborative process, which engages all the stakeholders of your practice. From practitioners to patients.”*

**Joe Heinowski**

*Senior Designer, Plunkett Raysich Architects, LLP*

New ideas also surfaced throughout the design process that contributed to the Neuroscience experience. For example, to create the ideal outcome in the exam room setting, the experienced-based design team used the innovative Rapid-Access Prototyping (RAP) tool to assist in the visualization of design options to maximize results. First, we cleared out one of the ten by ten exam rooms and began designing the experience from there. The revolutionary change we were looking for would not have come from simply rearranging the environment that already existed. We challenged traditional thinking by starting with an open palette.

In order to meet the Neuroscience Group’s differentiated service goals, our team engaged key stakeholders and patients in a collaborative ideation process to develop concepts and solutions which truly make a difference in people’s lives. The facility offers:

- Integrated care delivery examination, diagnostics, intervention and rehabilitation



“The transformation process began with three outcomes in mind - each focused on emotion, the most important aspect of the Ideal Patient Experience. We asked ourselves the following questions: How well cared for do our patients feel when they’re with us? How do families feel about the care we’re providing for their loved ones? How does our team feel in setting and exceeding the standard for comprehensive, compassionate care? Our facility needed to cater to each one of the outcomes of those questions, and that is why its design and construction was so integral to our goals.”

**Susan Hibbs, M.D.**

*Neurologist, Neuroscience Group*



- A new free-standing outpatient center including 32 exam rooms, MRI, two procedure rooms, x-ray, EMG and EEG rooms; in addition, an area is dedicated to physical therapy exam rooms and a rehabilitation gym
- Process evaluation, redesign and facility to support positive interactions
- A clear operational layout with separate public and service flows, and departmental adjacencies that support both patient and caregiver during a variety of care cycles
- Custom design exam rooms that are specifically designed using a Rapid Access Prototyping process
- Technology integration with strategic placement of PACs and EMR or physician and caregiver access, coordinated design of operations and RF technology streamlines patient flows and supports the ideal patient experience
- An environmentally-friendly design with site features that include wetland and restoration, along with water retention and filtering
- Commissioned mechanical, lighting and solar panel systems that are monitored for continued efficiencies
- A themed interior that extends the natural surrounding to the inside; natural materials juxtaposed with modern contemporary elements provide for visual interest and a sense of surprise
- Furnishings were selected for a sense of comfort with larger upholstered pieces that give a feel of hospitality and retail to a healthcare setting; and a variety of color themes work together to help break down the overall scale of the facility and help patients locate their destinations

## Experience Innovation

*“What is the new way of thinking? The new frontier, the one that remains wide open: experience-based design. Connecting with patients and staff members in ways that we could only dream about a few short years ago. The seamless integration of the physical, informational and behavioral elements causing incredible attachment.”*

**Steve Tyink**

*Vice President Business Innovation, Miron Construction Co., Inc.*



How do you define ideal? How do your patients and guests define ideal? Where are there barriers... people... place... or service? Understanding that defining your Ideal Patient Experience will set you apart from the competition is really your first step in initiating your organization's ideal experience and your customers' or patients' "brand" attachment.

In an era of change and transparency, patients are seeking a personalized connection to their caregivers. The quality care you provide is a reason they seek your services. Your connectivity on a personal level builds a foundation for long-term relationships. Environments that support and enhance the process while addressing all of our senses create an experience that exceeds expectations.

To learn more about how to create compelling patient experiences while improving productivity and growing revenues for your practice, call:

**Gary Billington**

*Plunkett Raysich Architects, LLP*

☎ 414.410.2946

✉ gbillington@prarch.com

**Steve Tyink**

*Miron Construction Co., Inc.*

☎ 920.969.7047

✉ Dennis.Lynch@miron-construction.com

“By simply altering processes, modeling impression areas and attach points, understanding outcomes and shifting behaviors, the experience at the Neuroscience Center now closely reflects the organization's mission and commitment to its patients. The Result? An experience that is unforgettable. The ultimate healing environment and ideal patient experience have been created and are well underway.”

**Philip A Yazbak, M.D., F.A.C.S.**

*President, Neuroscience Group*



11000 West Park Place  
Milwaukee, WI 53224

P 414.359.3060

F 414.359.3070

[www.prarch.com](http://www.prarch.com)



**Building Excellence**

1471 McMahon Drive  
Neenah, WI 54956

P 920.969.7000

F 920.969.7393

[www.miron-construction.com](http://www.miron-construction.com)

