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A Good First Impression: Curb Appeal

Today's competitive health care environment demands that facilities offer a state of the art physical plant with a variety of features and amenities.

The image that a facility portrays starts at the curb. A visitor's first steps, from the curb to the reception desk, go a long way in leaving a lasting first impression which may or may not be favorable.

As the saying goes, you only have one chance to make a good first impression. To this end many of our clients have upgraded their public areas through major alterations and additions. The alteration work often extends to admissions and social service office areas as these are usually the first administrative areas seen by a prospective client and their family.

Dedicated family spaces with soft lighting and comfortable seating are key ingredients to creating a soothing and welcoming experience. In our recent lobby work, we have established the following design criteria:

- Create an architectural presence which relates to the surrounding community, identifies the entry, eliminates barrier free obstacles and is compatible with the existing building.
- Create a grand space of significant dimensions, which conveys the facility's identity and mission and which also serves as a recreational amenity for residents and families.
- Use materials that are classic (won't go out of style), durable, warm and which evoke nature. Use a related range of colors and textures to suggest movement and create visual interest with some contrast.
- Reinforce a home-like environment through the use of residential style furnishings, lighting and finishes.
- Produce a design solution that can be accomplished in phases, reducing the fiscal and operational strain of a major alteration.

Some of the techniques we have utilized to achieve these goals include:

- The use of logos and digital media equipment to convey an organization's mission and identity.
- Using a variety of light fixture types which relate to different ceiling profiles and materials.
- Dividing the floor into functional zones, delineating circulation paths and using different floor accents within an overall palette.

