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Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital
Receives Top Design Award from Modern Healthcare Magazine

Modern Healthcare magazine, in its September 7th issue, announced that Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital received an Award of Excellence for its facility design. Modern Healthcare's 24th Annual design competition reviewed 88 entries and chose 7 winners. This year Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital was the only facility to receive the Award of Excellence, the highest honor in the competition. Honorable mention was given to four other notable healthcare facilities: Children's Medical Center at Legacy, Plano, Texas; Kennedy Krieger Institute, Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building, Outpatient Center, Baltimore, Maryland; Stanford Medicine Outpatient Center, Redwood City, California; and Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Entrants were scored on the basis of design excellence, functional utility, flexibility of design, and response to patients. This year, judges not only noted how the award winning projects made exceptional use of natural light, and how the new facilities fit into and matched their environment but they also chose projects that took a regional approach to the use of materials. They also considered the ability of the facilities' design to accommodate family members as well as patient safety and energy efficiency concepts, to ergonomically engineer a workplace that made life easier for staff, and that added amenities that could help recruit and retain top personnel.

The featured article on Grand Itasca described the need to replace the original hospital that had been built in 1917 and highlighted the important role that the Blandin Foundation played in supporting the project. The Modern Healthcare article quoted Jim Rasche, one of Kahler-Slater's three executive officers and lead architect on the project saying, "The hospital and a large independent physician group in the community came together as a single-integrated-delivery system with shared equipment and procedure spaces, and created a new model of care around what is essentially an ambulatory-care model with beds."

Judges for the competition included both architects and hospital personnel from across the country. All judges praised the project, commenting-it was the most superior entry-there was a sense of intimacy to it and serenity-it took full advantage of the site-the project had real harmony with nature and radiated peace and caring-it made me want to work there.

This is not the first award by the architectural firm for the Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital design. Earlier this year, Kahler-Slater had picked up an Honors Award for excellence in design from the 2009 Design Awards program of AIA Wisconsin, the state society of the American Institute of Architects. The Wisconsin awards recognize creative, contemporary, innovative and environmental solutions in architecture. Kahler-Slater is located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

“When we entered the planning stage for the hospital, I remember Dr. Kristin Johnson, a member of the community planning team, saying, ‘We want the new facility to be surprising.’ It is nice to know that others recognize the creative effort and thought that our community, providers, employees, Foundation, Blandin Foundation and Kahler-Slater put into planning this amazing facility,” said Steve Feltman, CFO and Senior Vice President of Finance at Grand Itasca.

Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital is a non-profit, integrated delivery system that employs nearly 600 people. The integrated clinic and hospital, described as a “modern expression of hospitality and healing” is home to over 50 physicians and other providers including specialists in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Orthopedics, Ob/Gyn, Pediatrics, Podiatry, Urology, and Acute Rehabilitation.