

# Meridian Center for Health

Seattle, Washington

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NBBJ PROJECT CASE STUDY

# No Wrong Door

Integrated Care for the Underserved

## MERIDIAN CENTER FOR HEALTH

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The Meridian Center for Health unites three health organizations under the same roof. Made possible by a unique partnership between Neighborcare Health, Valley Cities and King County Public Health, the Center provides comprehensive health services at low-to no-cost for adults, children and infants in Seattle, WA.



## VISION

The Meridian Center for Health seamlessly integrates an array of typically siloed clinical and social services—including medical, dental, infant, maternity, behavioral, and recovery programs—for the underprivileged in underserved Seattle neighborhoods.

## BREAKTHROUGH

Understanding and addressing the diverse determinants to health required thinking more broadly about what constitutes healthcare and how it is practiced. Meeting patients where they are—by uniting three different organizations—bridges the gaps to wellness by providing the services necessary to support a fulfilling life.

## VALUE

The Meridian Center is more than a place to go when one is ill—but also a place to go when one is well. To create an environment of health and wellbeing, the project addresses not just clinical needs in isolation, but also the social determinants of wellness, while embracing the rejuvenating aspects of nature through a restored site.

## INSIGHT

Eliminating wasteful handoffs between healthcare organizations promotes healthier outcomes. Creating a model where multiple services come to the patient during a visit instead of numerous follow-ups allows for a more accessible network of resources for living a healthy life.



# A Site of Healing

The Meridian Center for Health is operated by Neighborcare Health and partially funded by a federal Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) grant. It replaced a former public health clinic built in 1980. The site was repurposed to provide easier access and more open space for patients and their families, while enhancing an existing public park at the southeast corner.

A range of purposeful exterior components and site planning promote healing:

- ① **The façade.** Weathering steel wraps the building in a protective layer inspired by nearby iron oxide-rich Lichten Springs. Duwamish tribes believed the springs contained healing powers, and would rub the spring's red mud on their bodies and their longhouses.
- ② **Patios.** Expansive covered outdoor patios crafted from regional cedar wood offer a sense of warmth and comfort while honoring the healing and protective legacy of the site. These spaces provide spaces for patients—including homeless or behavioral health patients who may be uncomfortable indoors—to relax or to wait, or to even have a consultation with a healthcare provider.
- ③ **Landscapes.** In collaboration with a local landscape architecture firm, the existing public green space was preserved and enlarged.





## Restorative Landscapes, Caring for the Environment

The Meridian Center for Health incorporates a range of design responses to minimize ecological impacts: from healthy materials to operable windows with views to the landscape. In collaboration with a local landscape architecture firm, SiteWorkshop, the existing grass retention pond was enlarged to create an improved habitat for local wildlife and manage storm water runoff. The project also added new footbridges, enhancing the site's nature art walk.

A 25kW solar array on the roof—with space to to expand and allow up to 75 kWh—eventually providing 16% of the total annual electrical power used by the building. The only source of power used in the building is electrical: there are no fossil fuels such as diesel, natural gas or oil. As electricity is served by a zero-carbon utility, the building exceeds the goals outlined by the 2030 Challenge, a global energy reduction program.



# 2030

CHALLENGE



**57%**  
REDUCTION

The native, wildlife-friendly landscape reduces the need for irrigation water by 57%.



**40%**  
REDUCTION

The project is expected to use 60% less energy than a typical clinic.



The reengineered retention pond handles 100% of the project's storm water runoff and sediment storage.



An intensive construction management plan resulted in 96% of construction waste recycled.

## A Warm Welcome

The clinic fosters a “no wrong door” philosophy to serve a patient population that speaks more than 65 languages via multilingual signage and wayfinding. By providing a welcome zone as the one point of entry, the clinic creates a fully integrated and united public face.

A simplified patient journey reduces patients’ stress and increases trust in the care team, while seamlessly connecting complex health services.



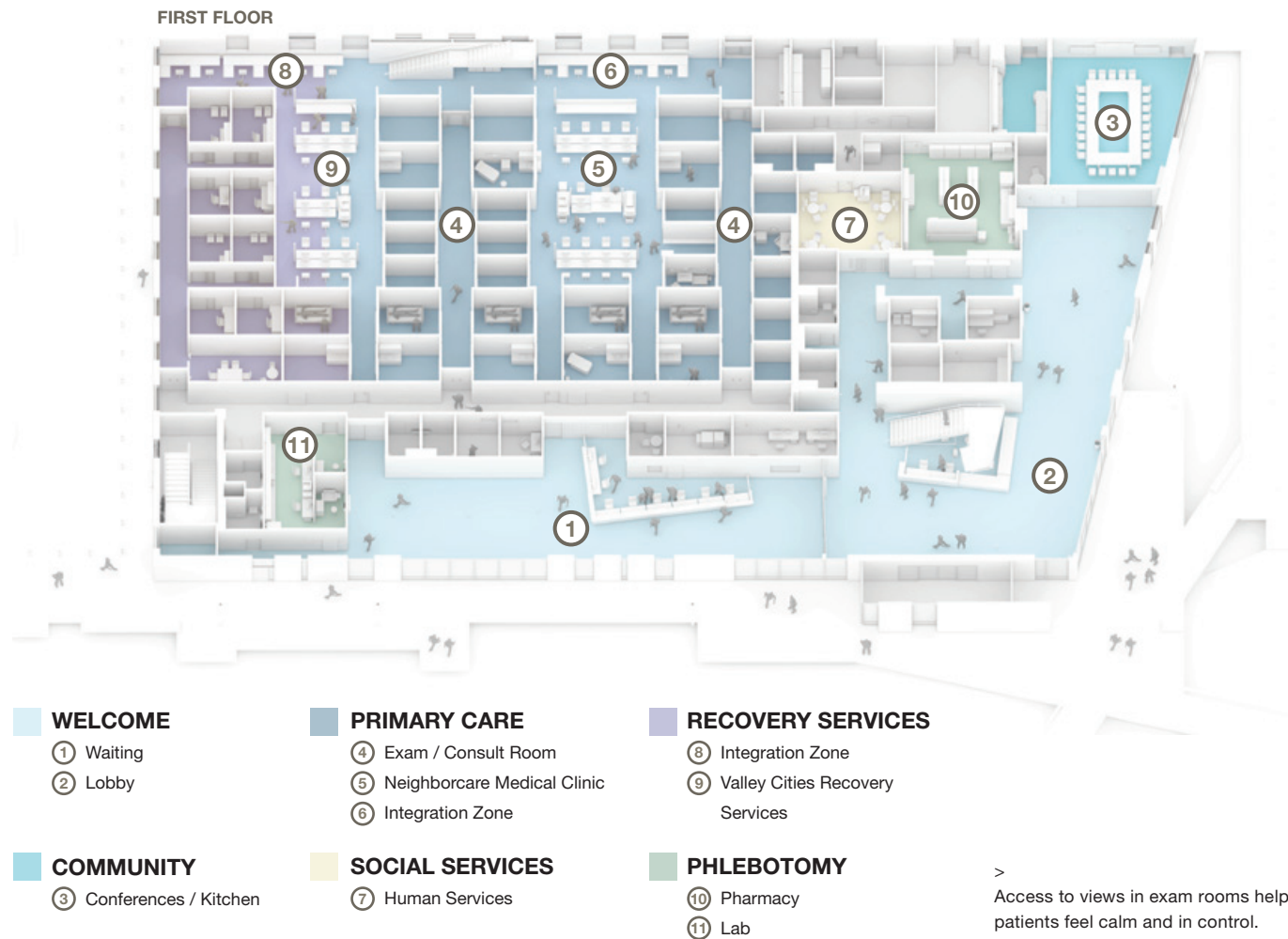
# Whole Person. Whole Health.

Eliminating waste—redundancy and repetition—is a central design goal of the Meridian Center for Health. Rather than referring patients to various specialists across medical clinics and campuses, different healthcare providers can meet patients right where they are—even together simultaneously in the same exam room.

Beyond clinic areas, there are spaces for community resources that stay open into the evening—from conference rooms, housing placement assistance, job training, resume writing, nutrition advice and cooking classes. This one-stop-shop, holistic approach minimizes registration paperwork, travel and wait times for patients. During the day these spaces double as group education and therapy rooms.

Flexible features, such as large-format sliding and pivoting doors allow these spaces to work individually or together, to cater to the diversity and variation of groups looking to support this patient population.

As a result, the center is able to operate as a true community asset, breaking out of the traditional boundaries of healthcare and offering a solution to a more holistic vision of health and wellness.



# Sustainable Integration, Not Just Collocation

Integrating a range of healthcare specialists—dental care, women, infant and children care, mental health wellness and more—helps increase provider availability and decrease treatment fragmentation.

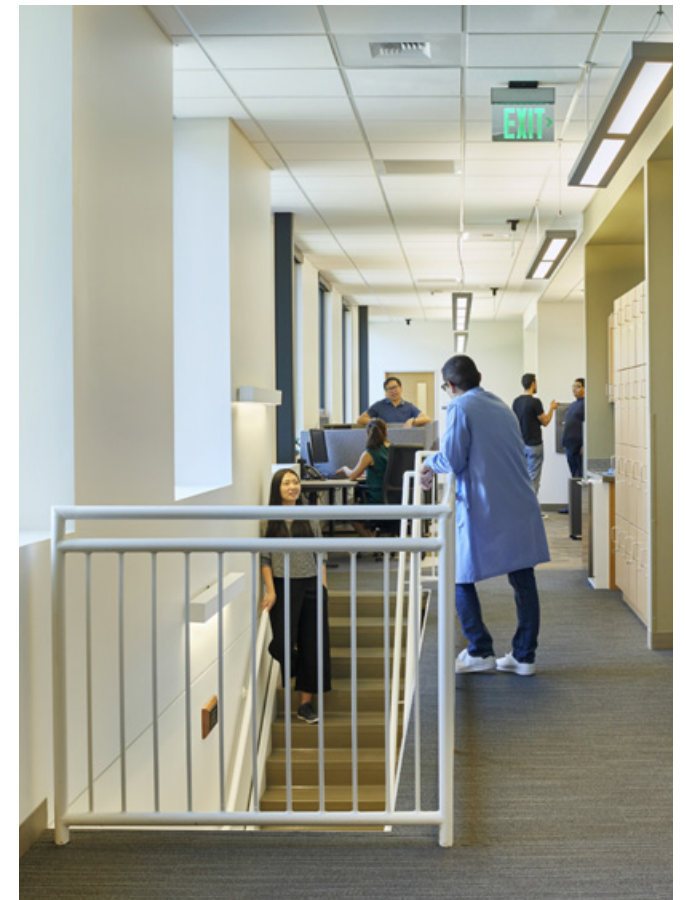
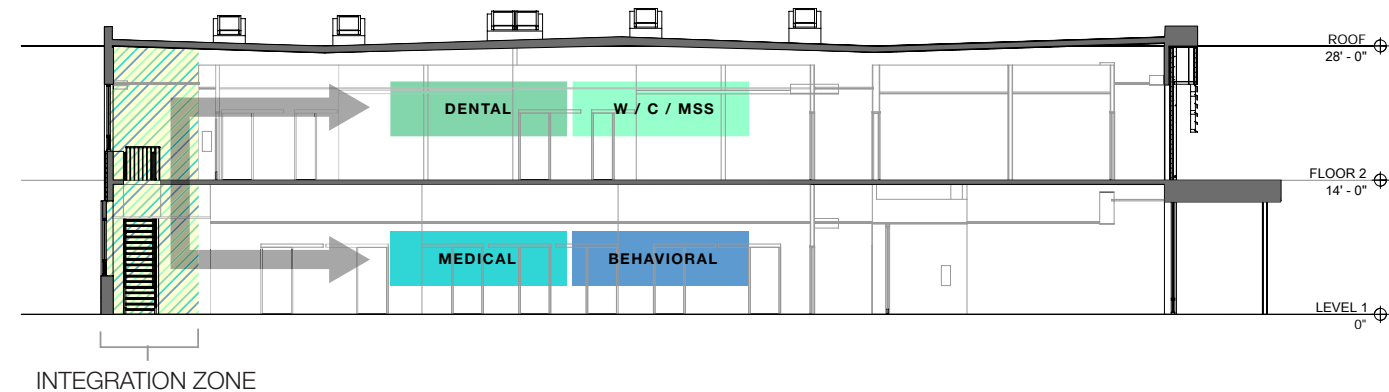
Teaming spaces, “hot desking” (shared workstations) and cross-specialty exam rooms, and a staff lounge (for potlucks and staff events) promote greater interaction and collaboration between different healthcare providers.



< NBBJ planners and designers mapped out the multiple functions of each space using transparent discs showing how the different clinic and community areas connect and intersect.

The design team carefully considered the placement of onstage areas (health provider with patient) and offstage areas (health provider without patient) and the circulation between them, to promote greater engagement—as well as privacy regarding sensitive medical information—for caregivers and patients alike.

## Building Vertical and Horizontal Circulation



^ Provider-shared exam rooms allow different specialists to treat patients simultaneously.





An array of public spaces—designed to support community events around healthy eating, living, social support and education—remain available for neighborhood organizations after hours.

**CLIENT**

Neighborcare Health

**SIZE**

44,800 SF

**COMPLETION DATE**

2015

**COMPONENTS**

Medical, dental, behavioral health, women, infants and children, maternity support services, human services

**SERVICES PROVIDED**

Architecture, interior design, medical planning, master planning

**SUSTAINABILITY**

Zero Net Carbon Building, Tracking LEED Gold, Meets 2030 Challenge

**AWARDS**

AIA/AAH Healthcare Design Award

IIDA Northern Pacific Chapter INawards, Design INhealthcare

Modern Healthcare Design Awards, Environmentally Friendly Award

**PUBLICATIONS**

*Architectural Record*, "Meridian Center for Health by NBBJ," April 1, 2017

*Fast Company*, "How The Affordable Care Act Is Transforming Health Care Design," March 27, 2017



## ABOUT NBBJ

NBBJ is an award-winning global design and architecture firm focused on helping clients capitalize on the relationship between people and the design of physical space to enhance organizational performance.

The world's leading healthcare providers trust NBBJ to deliver measurable and sustainable improvement in performance and care. Our teams have partnered with some of the leading healthcare institutions worldwide, including nine of the top 14 U.S. News and World Report Honor Roll hospitals. Within the architecture industry, NBBJ has been hailed as "Most Admired" by peers in Interior Design's annual Healthcare Giants survey, and ranked as the second largest healthcare design practice in the world by BD World Architecture.

NBBJ's network of offices enables us to deliver quality projects that are regionally and locally appropriate. It allows us to act as a single creative force, leveraging the latest thinking from our NBBJ colleagues in other locations, bringing a rich blend of expertise to each project.