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Out with the Old, In with the New: VMH Replaces Carpet with Forest fx

Vernon Memorial Healthcare (VMH) is a private, non-profit corporation, based in Viroqua, Wisc. that has been adding to and improving its facilities since it opened in 1951. It includes a hospital, six family practice physician clinics, home health and hospice services, three retail pharmacies, a wellness center, and a restaurant/grille.

For many years, VMH had used carpet and tile as its flooring of choice, primarily because personnel were not aware that wood grain, sheet vinyl flooring was available or an option for a healthcare environment.

When VMH made plans in 2004 for its ambulatory care/surgery center addition, the decision was made to try something new in terms of flooring – Polyflor Forest fx. “That was

our first introduction to this type of flooring,” said Eunice Hillman, VMH Construction Liaison.

Polyflor Forest fx is part of ECF Core Commercial Flooring (ECF), a sales entity which encompasses four innovative brands - QT, ECO98, ECOsurfaces and Polyflor - that are ideal for the commercial flooring market. Polyflor is distributed by ECF in the U.S. This beautiful vinyl flooring looks like wood, but is more durable and easier to clean.

“Our love affair with Forest fx really started with our 144,000 square foot medical office building, completed in 2006,” said Hillman. “It’s been almost seven years since the building was constructed, and the flooring still looks as good as when we put it in,” said Hillman.



VMH's color pallet typically reflects nature and earth tones. "With Forest fx there were more than 14 different shades of wood grain to choose from," said Hillman. "It became the product of choice. Using this type of flooring really added a wow factor."

VMH's main goal with its more recent renovations and construction projects has been to create a more responsive and need-specific environment through design. "We wanted to use aesthetics to help create a warm but professional look that would improve patient satisfaction, promote healing, enhance visitor comfort, and increase employee productivity," said Hillman. "We want our facility to be a home away from home, creating residential warmth instead of the traditional hospital environment."

In addition to its aesthetic appeal, VMH is a champion of Forest fx, because it's hygienic, easier to clean, and a quieter floor compared to tile and some carpet. Infection control is a priority in all hospitals. The floors must inhibit the growth of harmful bacteria, be durable, and easy to clean.

"Over the past three years, one of our goals has been to replace carpeting, especially in the patient areas," said Hillman. "The Forest fx we have installed is actually quieter than carpeting, more durable, and easier to clean."

Forest fx can be cleaned with a dry and wet mop and buffing. It does not require waxing. "The greatest benefits for us have been an affordable product, easy maintenance, the warmth and beauty of the flooring, noise reduction, cleanliness, and way finding (using the flooring to provide direction



to employees and patients)," said Hillman

As new construction and renovations continue, Forest fx will be a top choice for VMH's consideration when it comes to surfacing. "The new Center for Hospice Care that we are building will contain Forest fx," said Hillman. "We have found it to be a great product. It has added so much to our facility environment."

For more information about Forest fx, and also Ecore Forest rx, which has a recycled rubber backing, visit www.ecorecommercialflooring.com. ■