

# Women's College Hospital:

## Advancing inclusion and equity in healthcare



Photography: A-Frame

Building upon its 100+ year old legacy of advocacy and innovation in women's health, the redevelopment of Woman College Hospital sets a new standard for ambulatory health care.

Women's College Hospital (WCH) is a world leader in health for women, health equity and health system solutions. In shifting to an ambulatory care model, they needed a building that better responded to this new mandate. To help with the design of the new \$460-million building spanning 600,000 square feet in downtown Toronto, WCH looked to their stakeholders to inform and shape how the new space should look and function. Undertaking a two-year study ("A Thousand Voices for Women's Health"), WCH surveyed a broad spectrum of women to understand their healthcare experiences, their fears and hopes for the future. They found an overwhelming desire for a hospital that inspires health, healing and community, that focuses on wellness, not illness, and that represents all women and all of their distinct needs.

### Reducing Anxiety

Going to a hospital is filled with anxiety for a myriad of reasons, so the new building is designed to minimize those fears. From the moment one enters the building, care has been taken to make the space feel less intimidating. Taking its cues from boutique hotels, the triple volume lobby integrates plants, natural light, calming colors and curved walls to promote calm and comfort. Seating arrangements throughout the main floor feature organically shaped ottomans, curvy lounge seating and high wing back chairs to meet a range of requirements. The use of performance textiles on the seating enhances the sense of comfort and luxury while still meeting IPAC's cleaning and disinfecting requirements. Individual chairs are strategically placed to create retreat areas, while groupings of seats enable families and friends to be together. Safety being an imperative, there are no isolated spaces and sightlines are clear, so that staff can monitor activity. Importantly, destinations are easily and quickly reachable with clearly marked signage.



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### Empowering Patients

“Being an ambulatory care hospital means providing a completely different model of care,” says Heather McPherson, President and CEO\*. “So, we needed to design a building that could accommodate that type of care and the innovations required to provide it.” Starting with the lobby, each floor is arranged in “clinical neighborhoods” that group services patients are likely to require together in one place. Not only does this reduce time for patients going from appointment to appointment, but it also increases communication between clinicians. Kid’s areas with size-appropriate tables and chairs are size-available on every floor to ensure busy mothers are able to keep appointments even if they don’t have alternate child care.

### Nurturing Community

Where possible, the building welcomes the community inside, so the hospital is not shut-off as a segregated “sick place”. To bring life and energy in from the street, casual areas with café tables and chairs can be found

throughout the main floor, making it more common to see patients sitting alongside groups of students from nearby colleges while studying and eating. At the center of the new building is the conference center, which features an auditorium and a range of meeting spaces for the community to share ideas, discuss new research and educate future physicians. The conference center’s showpiece is an iconic hot pink box that is cantilevered above the southwest corner. Containing a multitasking space with mobile tables, it can be used for teaching, conferences and outreach. Emblematic of everything WCH is trying to accomplish, the pink box has a sense of openness and transparency on the one hand, balanced with strength and certainty on the other. A beacon for the bright future of health care at WCH.

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#### ARCHITECT

Perkins Eastman Black and IBI Group

#### FEATURED PRODUCTS

GC Sirena seating, Swap tables

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\*Quoted in “Momentous: Building the Hospital of the Future”, 2012 Access + Innovation Report Women’s College Hospital







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