

The Future of Healthcare: The Hospital

Kaiser Permanente, the healthcare system serving over 9 million people, is sponsoring a hospital design competition, called *Small Hospital, Big Idea*, focused on reducing the size of the typical hospital. Other goals include a higher efficiency in delivering medical services, and maintaining a near zero effect on the environment, all while not compromising their high quality of patient care.

Sound impossible? Not quite. With a large demand for facilities in smaller markets with scarcer resources and shrinking pools of skilled clinical staff, they think this is the hospital of the future. And the design community was eager to be involved; Kaiser received over 100 entries to the competition. They pared that down to 78, then nine teams were chosen to present their proposal in front of a panel of 10 judges. Out of that group, three finalists were chosen.

Featured in the final three proposals are a multitude of innovative, multifunctional and green initiatives. Because the competition called for ideas for small and sustainable healthcare facilities, room adaptability and energy efficiency measures popped up again and again. Energy-absorbing roofs that collect rainwater and large windows that allow natural light to pass through are just a few of the ideas.

Technology will also play a large role in the hospital of the future. Intelligent facilities will be able to do more with less; for example, touch-screen whiteboards on interior walls can allow patients to access their doctor's notes and transfer them to handheld devices.

Can you think of any other ideas for the Hospital of the Future?