

Research Summary

The Evolving Clinician Experience



Better care starts with better spaces for those who provide it.

Clinicians are navigating a rapidly evolving healthcare system. Rising administrative demands, more complex care needs, advancing technology and shifting care models are reshaping how care is delivered — creating new pressures and opportunities for the clinician experience.

Today, many clinicians still work in spaces that were not designed to meet the realities of current health environments. When these spaces fall short, stress increases, teamwork suffers and the quality of care can decline.

Rethinking the Clinician Experience

To explore the clinician experience, we conducted human-centered research on clinician wellbeing and partnered with leading healthcare systems and academic partners on collaborative research.

Clinician burnout is rising, and spaces must do more to reduce stress, support teams and reflect the value of clinicians.

Our Research Included:

59

Clinician Participants

229

Diary Entries Logged

52

Observation Hours in Clinical Environments

200+

Industry Articles and Reports Reviewed

Redesigning Spaces to Support Clinicians

Our research revealed ways that space can support clinicians to enable better care.



“We could improve our financials by putting more pressure on clinicians — but at what expense?”

Director of Clinic Operations

What Clinicians Need Their Spaces to Do

Support Focus and Teamwork

Enable clinicians to concentrate when needed and come together quickly to coordinate care, mentor or debrief.

Integrate Seamless Tech

Spaces must support hybrid care — reducing screen fatigue and accommodating evolving tech needs.

Promote Comfort + Recovery

Offer nearby respite, small comforts and moments of calm to manage emotional, physical and cognitive stress.

Signal Value + Purpose

Reinforce clinicians’ identity, support privacy and reflect the values of the organization to staff, patients and peers.

Ensure Safety + Wellbeing

From physical security to emotional support, environments must help clinicians feel protected and respected.

Adapt to New Care Models

Spaces must flex with new workflows, team structures, tools and delivery formats.

Insight 1: Clinicians must balance individual workflow and team interactions.

Clinicians juggle individual tasks while responding to frequent disruptions and coordination with teammates. Key moments — like shift changes, huddles and rounds — are essential for sharing information and aligning care. These interactions must be efficient, clear and adaptable to evolving needs.

Insight 2: Technology needs to improve care, not create more work.

While clinicians value innovation, many tools add complexity instead of reducing it. Data entry often outweighs time spent with patients, and remote care is growing without environments that support focus or professionalism. Still, clinicians remain open to solutions such as generative AI that can reduce administrative load and improve decision-making.

Insight 3: Clinicians need respite from emotional, physical and social demands.

Heavy workloads, emotional labor and staffing shortages leave many clinicians feeling depleted. Compassion fatigue, rigid hierarchies and even workplace violence add to daily stress—intensifying burnout and team conflict. Without time or space to recover, even small challenges can feel overwhelming.

Insight 4: Systems must enable performance without compromising wellbeing.

Healthcare systems are expected to improve patient satisfaction while also managing clinician burnout and staffing shortages. The physical environment plays a critical role in both. Supporting high performance and wellness requires leadership commitment and environments that reflect respect, dignity and organizational pride.



Insights in Action

We applied these insights across a range of typical healthcare spaces that clinicians use. While there are a wide variety of applications, these are just a few of the many developed that showcase our insights into clinician experiences.



Products That Make It Work

Sync Workstation
Coalesse Potrero415 Table
Amia Work Stool
Verge Stool
Montage Panel System
CF Intro Monitor Arm
Convey Modular Casework
Convey Mobile Storage
Migration Height Adjustable Desk
Universal Storage
Universal Worksurfaces
V.I.A. Modular Wall

Nurse Station

Designed to support a variety of work modes, from collaborative interactions to focused, individual tasks. Integrated storage solutions accommodate the diverse needs of clinicians, while intuitive space division fosters communication between patients and staff.

Provide Safety

Open views across the unit to enhance team awareness, communication and coordination.

Variety of Postures

Seating, standing and perching options support posture changes and ergonomic comfort during long shifts.

Support Workflow

Intuitive space division helps staff stay focused while remaining visually and physically connected.



Products That Make It Work

- Convey Modular Casework
- Embold High Back Chair
- West Elm Health Lucas Lounge Chair
- Coalesse Jean Nouvel Ottoman
- West Elm Health Mesa Sectional Sofa
- Elective Elements Floating Shelf + Storage
- Soto Caddy
- Lite Scale Modular Walls
- Viccarbe Burin Mini Table
- Viccarbe Window Coat Rack
- Moooi NR2 Floor Lamp
- Snowsound Flap Chandelier

Respite

A restorative setting to support clinicians' wellbeing. Designed for privacy and acoustic comfort, it balances quiet retreat with optional social interaction to help staff decompress, reflect and recharge.

Biophilic Elements

Finishes, artwork and greenery that reflect nature can reduce clinician stress and anxiety.

Adjacent to Workspaces

Respite spaces must be in close proximity to workspaces.

Moments of Comfort

Include elements like adjustable lighting, ergonomic seating and soft materials to help staff relax and reset between moments of care.

Let's Get in Touch

To find out more about solutions + spaces that lead to better health outcomes for everyone involved in the complex work of care, visit SteelcaseHealth.com

Next Steps

Engage with an expert for our full research summary and countless design thought starters.

Experience our curated healthcare and workplace spaces through an in-person or virtual tour of our showrooms.

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