

# Pella Regional Health Center



Healthcare; Pella, Iowa

## Workplace Issues:

- Flexibility/Ease of Change
- Health and Safety
- Image/Branding
- Increased Retention/Reduced Turnover

## Applications:

- Administrative Station
- Healthcare: Emergency
- Healthcare: Laboratory
- Healthcare: Patient Care
- Public Space/Lobby

**Project Scope:** 105,376 square feet

## Herman Miller Products:

- Action Office System
- Co/Struc System
- Ethospace Nurses' Station
- Celle Chairs

## Programs/Services:

- Easy Options Capability

**Year Completed:** 2008



Pella Regional Health Center is a dynamo in miniature. “It’s a petri dish of potential,” says Kathy Okland, Herman Miller nurse consultant. Pella may serve a rural swath of southeast Iowa, but its vision is broad, and its approach to healthcare is ahead of its time. “The vision for the organization is to lead the region in providing healthcare,” says Yvonne O’Brien, chief nursing officer.

Pella has been designated a Critical Access Hospital with Joint Commission Accreditation. It is also pursuing Magnet status, a recognition of an extremely high level of excellence in nursing care, and it has embraced lean methodologies for several years.

So it’s not surprising that its new \$40 million, 100,000-square-foot expansion, which added a pharmacy, a lab, an infusion center, a wound care clinic as well as new medical/surgical, emergency, radiology, and ICU departments, is all state-of-the-art.

With this expansion, Pella hoped to create a more flexible, agile environment to support the hospital’s commitment to lean processes and overall quality improvement. Flexibility was important because the organization had already struggled with the limitations of built-in product in its former space. “We were constantly having to add on, build in, or take away,” says Ms. O’Brien.

The hospital also wanted to sharpen its image from the functional and utilitarian to something more upscale and sophisticated, and it needed to provide good ergonomic support for its nurses, who mirror the national average age of 40-50 years. So, from the workstations to the positioning of outlets in the walls, “it was important to have products that were adjustable and ergonomic,” says Sarah Herrmann, medical equipment manager with Graham Construction.

As part of an extensive competitive analysis, the Pella team joined the local dealer, Pigott, Inc., on a visit to the Herman Miller headquarters in Michigan, where they saw that, not only was Herman Miller an early adopter of lean methodology, but that it also has deep and established roots in the healthcare industry. Thus, Herman Miller brings unique resources and expertise to the table, such as dealers like Pigott that have design expertise and knowledge of healthcare products as well as nurse consultants like Kathy Okland.

Herman Miller nurse consultants combine a clinical background with hands-on experience in creating highly functional healthcare environments. “We are new eyes and can ask questions that the customer might not think to ask,” says Okland. “Kathy stepped in at critical time,” says Ms. O’Brien, “and because of her experience, she was able to help us very well with the flow of our processes.”

Pella’s new hospital has a “racetrack” design. Private rooms for patients are located around the perimeter of the facility and storage for supplies and large equipment in its core. Ethospace nurses’ stations serve the medical/surgical department, Intensive Care Unit, the Emergency Room, and ER admitting.

“These aren’t just nurses’ stations anymore; they’re communication stations,” says Ms. O’Brien. “The staff has some privacy in the back to consult with a physician or therapist, while patients and family are welcomed at the front.” Nursing substations, comprising a small work surface, a stool, and a supply cabinet are nestled between each pair of rooms.

Finishes were carefully chosen to conform to the hospital’s strict infection control standards. Within those guidelines, Pella installed a custom tile for the fascia of its nurses’ stations that mimics the rich look of wood veneer. Not only does this custom product from Herman Miller’s Easy Options capability offer much greater durability at a fraction of the cost of veneer, but “if a panel gets damaged by a wheelchair, we can take it out and replace it,” says Ms. O’Brien. “If a millwork station gets damaged, there’s nothing we can do.”

The lab is furnished with storage and shelf units from the Co/Struc system, which integrate perfectly with existing Herman Miller product that has served Pella well for decades. “It still works, and it’s still in great shape after 30 years,” says Ms. O’Brien. Mobile, high-density wire shelving from Eagle, a Herman Miller alliance company, equip utility rooms.

Beyond the clinical areas, Pella furnished both its private offices and administrative workstations with the Action Office system. Lounge and lobby areas look smart and welcoming with Brandrud soft seating and occasional tables. Celle and SitOnIt chairs are standard for task and guest seating throughout the facility. This range of product, much of which was supplied by Herman Miller alliance companies, not only allowed Pella to leverage the financial advantage of ordering from a single source, but also simplified installation. “It was much easier than buying from multiple vendors,” says Ms. O’Brien.

As Pella strives to envision its future, it is assured that its physical environment will endure and adapt to that future, rather than presenting an impediment to change. And with Herman Miller and its alliance partners, Pella can draw, not only on a breadth of product, but also on a depth of knowledge to address the challenges to come.



