



Chelsea Community Hospital and Wieland Healthcare partner in furniture reuse programs

The concept of reuse has most often been applied to medical products, but everyone knows hospitals, and the world in general, often throw away perfectly good stuff. The disposable world we live in has exacted a huge toll on our environment.

Chelsea (MI) Community Hospital, an independent, non-profit, acute care facility, took the matter to heart when it realized remodeling projects didn't have to involve throwing away outdated furniture.

Working with Premier contracted furniture supplier Wieland Healthcare of Grabil, IN, the hospital found it could maximize its investments and extend its furniture lifecycles through an environmentally conscious effort to re-cover chairs and other kinds of furniture with fabric.

Wieland claims that its easily replaceable fabrics and components ensure that a worn-out appearance can be renewed with a simple, on-site change, said Ryan Loeffler, market manager, and its moisture barrier prevents foams from breaking down or becoming damaged.

Rick Schneider, Chelsea's materials management supervisor, said the hospital has been recovering its furniture through Wieland for more than 20 years, consistently recovering units to refresh interior decor. The hospital also incorporates aggressive recycling and environmental responsibility initiatives throughout its facilities. "It's something we feel is very important for us," he said.

"Prior to purchasing Wieland in the mid-1980s, we would hire re-upholstery companies when seating needed to be replaced due to damage or outdated style," Schneider said. "Today, the process of changing upholstery is simplified."

Schneider said the hospital recently replaced upholstery covers on 14 Wieland chairs and loveseats in its Diagnostic Imaging Center for about a third of the cost for replacements. "We exchanged the covers not because they had worn out, but simply because the color scheme didn't match the newly replaced carpet," Schneider added.

Schneider said renewability has become an evaluation standard at Chelsea for a wide variety of products. "Each department in the hospital participates in furniture purchases for their respective area," Schneider said. "We often find furniture that someone believes is no longer useful. But when I peel back a portion of the upholstery and reveal how easy the covers can be replaced, they're surprised with how easy and affordable the solution is."

***Premier Contract: Wieland Furniture Inc. FA002D Patient room furnishings
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