

Project: Oregon State Hospital
Location: Salem, OR
Designers: SRG Partnership and HOK
Products: Wood & stainless steel handrails, corner guards, crash rails & feature rails and Acrovyn® wall panels & rigid sheet



About the Project

The Oregon State Hospital's (OSH) first Salem campus building opened in 1883 and was designed according to best practices at the time for integrating the natural environment into the patient experience to improve recovery rates. In 2007, the state commissioned SRG Partnership and HOK to collaborate on modernizing the design with a similar integrative approach using today's architectural best practices, which differ significantly from the 'unit-based' behavioral health model under which the building was originally constructed. As a result of the expansion and renovation, OSH Salem campus now accommodates 620 beds in 835,000 square feet of building space, alongside 293,000 square feet of natural outdoor areas.

Design Goals

Modern architectural practices for mental health facilities have shifted significantly from the original vision for OSH that was planned years ago. Architects SRG Partnership and HOK were tasked by the state to redesign one of the oldest mental health hospitals on the West Coast following a design philosophy that allows patients to connect with the facility and the outside world. This overarching approach is believed to empower patients while aiding disease remission and reintegration into society. The SRG Partnership and HOK 'treatment mall' design incorporated three aspects: patient sleeping quarters, a common area for meals and recreation and an earned-access facility that helps promote a seamless transition into society after recovery.

"We've found that people react to different colors in positive and negative ways, and we used this knowledge to inform our interior design decisions," said Steve Riley, VP & Director of Architecture at HOK. "We chose C/S Acrovyn wall panels for the variety of available colors and textures and, of course, for their long-lasting durability. The warm wood-like panels we selected give patients and visitors a relaxing and healing natural atmosphere."

Not utilizing features and materials that could be used to harm patients and staff is essential when designing a mental health facility. C/S was selected in part due to its strong record of meeting safety requirements for high-security environments. The architects also worked with C/S to design custom rails that suit the needs of geriatric and head trauma patients at risk of falling. "Safety is paramount in this environment, and C/S' customizable product offerings allowed us the opportunity to ensure the safety of OSH visitors, patients and staff," said Riley.

Results

In order to achieve the degree of safety necessary for this facility, the architects worked with OSH to employ the use of materials that lead the industry in terms of safety and durability. C/S' wood and stainless steel handrails, as well as crash and custom feature rails, allow for the safe movement through the facility of elder and at-risk patients. The beautiful, calming wood pattern chosen for the C/S Acrovyn wall panels and rigid sheets complements the stunning panoramic views of the surrounding natural acreage. These, along with C/S corner guards, comprise the selection of durable products that will ensure the building remains **resilient for many years to come.** "I've worked with Acrovyn® on projects before, and because of the high quality of the products and custom care that I received working with C/S, I plan to use Acrovyn® 4000 products again," Kirchner noted.

At a Glance

- The interior design requirements for behavioral health facilities differ from those in other healthcare environments due to increased safety concerns for psychiatric patients who potentially may harm themselves or others on ligature points and detachable materials.
- Architects and designers can select from a dynamic range of Acrovyn wall protection products to match both the unique aesthetic and the functional requirements of behavioral health facilities.