



## Easing Growth with Flexible Solutions

Memorial Medical Center secures a means to grow with modular carpet.

By Clarence Porch

A hospital on the move, Memorial Medical Center in Modesto, Calif., has exploded in size and services since it opened its doors in 1970. From humble beginnings as a 72,000-square-foot, 99-bed facility, the not-for-profit hospital has grown to encompass 506,913 square feet and 313 licensed acute care beds. With area population projected to grow by 25 percent over the next 10 years, Memorial decided in 2004 to embark on a \$160 million, seven-story expansion that will feature 112 acute inpatient beds and 18 state-of-the-art operating rooms when it opens in early 2007.

### Searching for Durability

With facility needs constantly in flux, Memorial sought flooring that could easily change with floor plan reconfigurations. "We have so much construction here," says John Del Re, Memorial's director of facilities. "We need flooring we can easily remove and put back down. In healthcare, you're always moving walls." Del Re knew that modular carpet would provide the flexibility he needed while establishing a sophisticated aesthetic. But he also needed flooring that would hold up to rigorous wear, stains and soiling and allow easy movement of wheeled traffic.

Del Re had used modular carpet in other areas successfully since the 1980s and wondered if it would perform in Memorial's high-traffic, high-maintenance areas. To test the idea, Del Re turned to an international carpet leader to provide a modular carpet engineered specifically for rigorous healthcare environments. The first installation was in a high-maintenance outpatient surgery area. "That's where it all started," Del Re says. Even under these rigorous conditions, the carpet main-



Modular carpet engineered specifically for rigorous healthcare environments was installed in high-traffic, high-maintenance areas of Memorial Medical Center.

tained its appearance. Del Re then installed it in the cafeteria, another problematic area for staining, where the carpet performed well for eight years.

### Added Value

Now a believer, Del Re set about installing modular carpet throughout the hospital. He selected an engineered modular carpet with a patented, high-performance system and a top-

performing nylon fiber that is tufted into a tight construction for durability and roller mobility. The modular carpet also offers sustainable advantages that include designs for healing environments, cost and waste reductions, an adhesive-free backing that improves indoor air quality and chemistries for extended life. The carpet has performed so well that Del Re plans to use it in the new seven-story tower now under construction.

## ► Focus on Design

With so much of it in use at Memorial, Del Re has quickly become an expert on modular carpet, and other facility managers in the Sutter Health system often go to him for advice. He points to several expected, as well as surprising, benefits that he has derived from modular carpet. "We have a 24-hour operation," says Del Re. "With modular we can install carpet while we have patient care going on. It is much easier than roll goods, as it doesn't disrupt the operation."

The carpet's adhesive-free backing also speeds the process and installs 30 percent faster than broadloom. Because there is no need to wait for adhesives to dry, just-installed carpet can be used immediately. In addition, Memorial uses a lift system that raises furniture so that modular carpet can be installed directly underneath, which saves installation time and costs.

## Sustainable Advantages

Del Re found that a surprising aspect of modular carpet is its sustainability. The carpet can be sent back to the manufacturer to be rejuvenated, redesigned and reused. In addition, the carpets eliminate the use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and adhesives, improving indoor air quality. Several patented chemistries keep carpet cleaner and prolong its useable life.

Del Re cites the ability to replace stained modular carpets as a key benefit in maintaining a cleaner appearance. "We have a system of replacing worn or stained carpet tiles, but the new carpet is so stain-resistant, we haven't replaced any yet," he says.

Memorial's maintenance staff handles the replacement, taking new modular tiles from attic



Modular carpet offers sustainable advantages, including designs for healing environments and cost and waste reductions.

stock and replacing them without the cutting and patching required with broadloom carpet.

Another surprise in the process was that there was such a large selection of designs, reports Del Re. The facilities director works with a team that includes the CEO, the COO and several managers to select carpet patterns. "It's unbelievable how many colors and designs were available," he says. "It's important to have a large collection of in-stock designs so that we can give the team as many options as possible."

## Conclusion

Del Re also installed modular carpets in the Medical Surgery Wing of the Memorial

Medical Center in Las Banos, Calif., another hospital he helps with interior design projects. His extensive experience with modular carpet has made him the go-to guy for carpet in the Sutter Health system. "I've been using modular carpet forever. My staff is really happy with it, and other facilities are starting to see the benefits too." F

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Clarence Porch is manager of healthcare markets for Milliken Carpet; 201 Lukken Industrial Drive West, LaGrange, GA 30240; (800) 241-4826, Ext. 5344; Fax: (706) 880-5906; E-mail: [clarence.porch@milliken.com](mailto:clarence.porch@milliken.com).

# Milliken Contract

201 Lukken Industrial Drive West, LaGrange, GA 30240;

(800) 241-4826, Ext. 5344; Fax: (706) 880-5906;

E-mail: [clarence.porch@milliken.com](mailto:clarence.porch@milliken.com); Internet: [www.millikencarpet.com/healthcare](http://www.millikencarpet.com/healthcare).