

The Boston Globe

Architect: New design for Fallon clinic cuts down on wait time

08/12/2011

By Chris Reidy, Globe Staff

Margulies Perruzzi Architects said it has completed the renovation of an existing 15,000 square-foot clinic in Leominster for Fallon Community Health Plan, a Worcester-based health insurer, with the aim of reducing waiting room time for patients.

Nearly all players in the health care industry are looking to contain costs while improving patient satisfaction. And those are among the goals of the Leominster clinic renovation, said Marc Margulies, a principal at Boston-based Margulies Perruzzi Architects, or MPA.

The clinic has been redesigned into a so-called “medical home,” a facility that aims to bring together a team of health care professionals to educate and monitor their patients, Margulies said. This new kind of clinic needs a layout that is both flexible and efficient; it needs clear sight lines so clinic personnel can easily keep track of one another; and it needs offices that are situated so doctors walk shorter distances. To achieve that objective,

MPA used 3D technology and special modeling software to avoid potential bottlenecks at the check-in desk. Since the clinic re-opened as a medical home a few weeks ago, the average wait time for patients has been cut from 33 minutes to nine minutes.

Long waits not only irritate patients; they can also erode a health plan’s profitability, Margulies said. By reducing wait times, doctors can see more patients, and that improves a clinic’s efficiency, he said.

“What patients hate is waiting around,” he said.

FW Madigan was the general contractor on the project.