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PWC holds Healthcare Construction Forum on March 15th; Moderated by Dr. Anderson of Stantec Architecture

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Jeff Wallace



Shown (from left) are: Barbara Armand, PWC president; Chelsea LeMar, PWC executive director; Donna Ryan-Rose; Dr. Diana Anderson; Christina DeRose; Thomas Ahn; Tracy Nichols; and Neil Halpern.

New York, NY On March 15th. Professional Women in Construction held its Healthcare Construction Forum at

Steelcase Showroom. The forum offered perspective into the world of healthcare construction in N.Y. The panel discussed a range of topics, including design and its effect on patient satisfaction, technological advancements within the sector, creative repurposing solutions, and the challenges of equipment installation.

The moderator of the event, Dr. Diana Anderson, medical planner at Stantec Architecture, is both a doctor and an architect, coining the title “dochitect.” She said, “This diverse panel of passionate, thought leaders provides a candid snapshot of what building and growth means in today’s healthcare community.”

The panel included: Tracy Nichols, area healthcare manager, Steelcase Showroom; Thomas Ahn, vice president, Mount Sinai Health System; Christina DeRose, director of leasing and space management, Weill Cornell Medical College; Neil Halpern, MD, MCCM, FACP, FCCP, chief of critical care medicine, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; and Donna Ryan-Rose, director, Strategic Projects, Northwell.

In the discussion of patients and the importance of design, Nichols showed research that 80% of a patient’s time in the office is spent in discussion, while only 20% is the actual exam. “We need to re-think how we treat space and the importance of patient comfort,” she said.

Ahn said, “Patient satisfaction has a lot to do with the patient’s first impression of the office.” Ahn and Nichols both discussed how technology is being used to redefine the patient experience, from telecommunications to home visits.

Dr. Halpern spoke about design in the ICU, and how bringing practitioners into the process is integral. He said, “The inclusion of medical professionals in healthcare design and construction is critical to its success.” He also commented upon the importance of the integration of connectivity and interoperability in transforming data into useful information for patient care.

Within the topic of refurbishing spaces for medical use, DeRose and Ryan-Rose both cited the difficulties of placing MRI machines in new buildings. The machines weigh 12,000-18,000 pounds, and must be placed in a building by crane because they are too heavy for any elevator. Also, their location must maintain both quiet, low vibrations, and no magnetic pulls for the machines to work correctly. They both discussed different methods they have used to successfully place MRIs.

Panelists also discussed refurbishing buildings for medical use and how technology is changing the industry. Questions covered topics such as natural disaster preparedness, cyber security, shifts in healthcare design, and the generational gaps in utilizing healthcare.

As Nichols presented, healthcare construction is a \$2.7 trillion industry. Yet \$750 billion has been recorded as wasted without improving outcomes, and 187,000 people have died from medical errors and hospital acquired infections. Not only is work in the healthcare construction sector a unique challenge with high rewards, but it is also absolutely critical to the life and health of our city. This panel, well-balanced with construction/real estate experts, as well as medical practitioners, gave us an overview and numerous insights into this essential work.



Donna Ryan-Rose addressing the PWC attendees.



Tracy Nichols addressing the PWC attendees.

The event was co-chaired by Maria Wilpon, principal, Stantec Architecture and Arthur SanFilippo, associate, Stantec Architecture and sponsored by Stantec, HAKS, Sherwin Williams and Steelcase.

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