

Incorporating technology, physical infrastructure to improve parking experiences

BY BETH BRYAN

5 Trends IN HEALTHCARE PARKING

The parking experience at healthcare facilities is continually evolving as more hospitals, and the parking structures and services that cater to them, are constructed. The technology within the parking structures, as well as their design, continues to advance in order to ease the stress that comes with the healthcare parking experience. Both patients and their families need simple, stress-free parking experiences. The following five trends are being integrated into the healthcare parking experience.

#1 Parking count & guidance systems

Parking count and guidance systems, which provide patrons with space-by-space availability information, have long been a staple technology at airports and are increasingly being installed at healthcare parking garages.

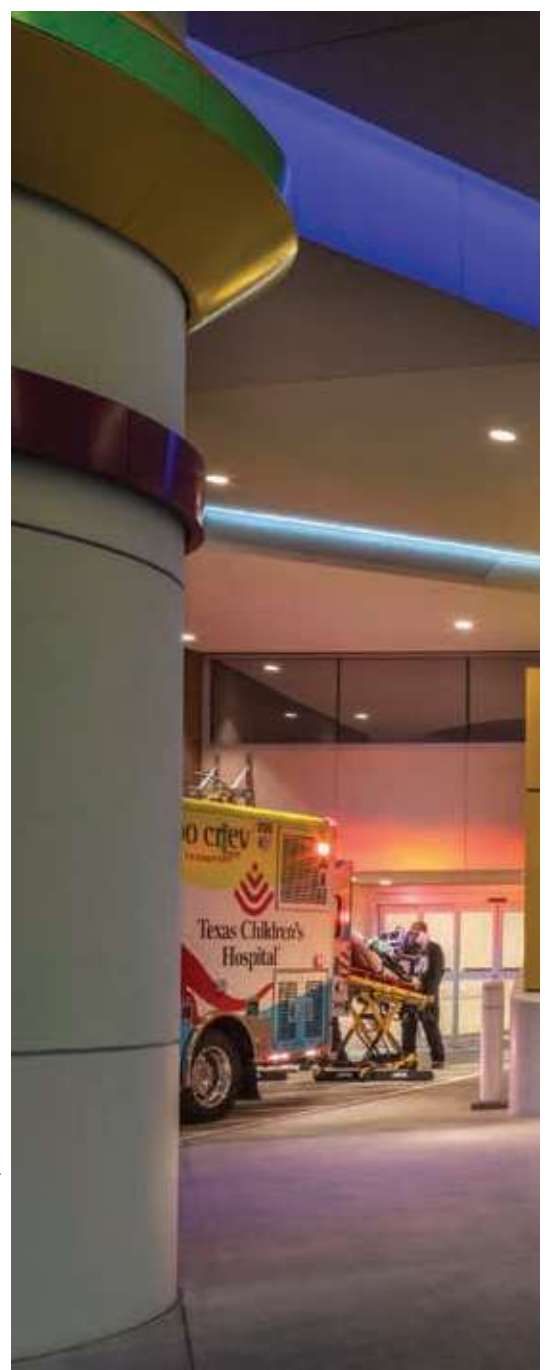
These systems offer several benefits to patients and visitors, including reduced

stress and frustration when finding an available parking space, improved timeliness for appointments and patient visits, the ability to find a vehicle if lost and reduced traffic congestion throughout the parking structure. Ultimately, the systems provide accurate data that assists patrons with their parking destination while concurrently increasing the parking space utilization within the structure.

The key components hospital owners must consider when constructing a new parking structure or retrofitting an existing parking structure consist of vehicle detection technology, digital message signs on the interior and exterior of the structure and central parking management software to manage the entire system.

#2 Gateless parking solutions

Gateless parking solutions that provide seamless entry to parking structures using license plate recognition technology behooves hospital employees



From top: Valet services at healthcare facilities have been increasing in popularity. The services create a first-class experience for patrons by allowing them to go right to the front door, shortening travel distances. > Clear and precise signage on healthcare parking structures ensures patrons get to their destination quickly and safely.



Additional Healthcare Parking Trends

In addition to the five trends outlined, there are several trends being instituted into healthcare parking designs including:

- 1. Separate drop-off and pickup zones:** Much like an airport, separate zones reduce confusion. Additionally, these zones help futureproof healthcare facilities for autonomous vehicles.
- 2. Express ramp design in parking structures:** Express ramps in parking garages increase the amount of flat floor parking, making it easier for people with disabilities to navigate.
- 3. EV charger placement:** To support sustainability goals, hospital owners are providing preferred parking for EV and low-emission vehicles.

and patients by providing shorter wait times for entry and exit, as well as the elimination of parking ticket loss. Furthermore, gateless parking solutions reduce costs for the owner in regard to installation and upkeep of parking gates, resulting in less long-term maintenance costs.

For owners, up-front expenses for the system include the LPR-related technology, automated payment kiosks, the development of a payment app, enforcement and clear signage and instructions at payment kiosks.

#3 Valet services

Valet services at healthcare facilities have increased in popularity in recent years. As new and retrofitted

hospitals come online, owners see valet services creating a first-class experience for patrons by allowing them to go right to the front door of the building they are heading to and shortening their travel distance. This is especially valuable for patients and families with limited mobility or disabilities. Valet services have also been implemented at the emergency room entrances allowing the driver to accompany their family member or friend into the hospital without the worry of parking their vehicle.

For healthcare owners, they can implement a valet services app for payment, as well as vehicle retrieval. Clear signage is also necessary to direct patrons to the valet drop-off area to indicate the parking rates for the service.

Parking count and guidance systems offer several benefits to patients and visitors, including reduced stress and frustration when finding an available parking space and reduced traffic congestion throughout the parking structure.

Additionally, it reduces the demand for Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant spaces on the campus and can allow for more efficient parking layouts. Valet services can provide a positive first point of access to the hospital for patrons, contributing to the positive customer service necessary to leave a lasting impression on their parking experience.

#4 Improved wayfinding & interactive parking directions

To ensure patrons get to their destination quickly and safely, healthcare parking structures have invested in clear and precise signage, as well as interactive wayfinding systems. Because healthcare facilities serve a diverse range of patrons, along with their specific mode of transportation, wayfinding signage must be scaled appropriately depending on whether it is intended for vehicular traffic or pedestrians. Signage should provide patrons with turn-by-turn directions to and from their parking space so the trip is both safe and efficient.

Additionally, interactive apps with maps and wayfinding are quickly becoming an integral part of a patient visit. Before their visit, a patient is sent a text message from their provider. The patient clicks on the link in the text where it opens the browser. The patient then inputs origin address and mode of transportation. The entire route is then displayed for the patient all the way to the room they need to get to.

#5 Integration with mobility systems

The integration with mobility systems such as vans or bus service, as well as bike sharing systems greatly reduce the parking demand at a healthcare facility. Hospital staff can be directed to park at remote locations with shuttle service to the facility. Closer parking can be prioritized for patients and visitors. Integration with external mobility



systems also improves access for patients and visitors from all backgrounds.

Integrating with a mobility system has different requirements for an urban area in comparison to a suburban setting, but each can be customized based upon the healthcare facility's needs.

Enhancing customer experience

The parking experience at healthcare facilities has undergone a significant transformation as customer-oriented changes are being driven by technological innovation, patient-centered design and the

integration with mobility systems.

Ranging from space-by-space guidance systems, gateless entry, valet services, enhanced wayfinding and multimodal transportation options, each trend helps to reduce parking-related hassles, improve efficiency and instill a welcoming and accessible environment for patients and staff.

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