2025 ACHA “Hot Topics” Newsletter

To: **ACHA Membership**

Date: **March 2025**

Introduction

2023 was the inaugural year of the ACHA “Hot Topics,” shared initially by way of a newsletter, and complemented by the Town Hall discussion in the fall 2023. This 2025 newsletter has been created by the ACHA’s Continuing Competency Committee (CCC) to help the ACHA membership stay current with trends and newest ideas in healthcare planning and design. This newsletter is intended to highlight the relevant topic, as well as select resources (e.g.: articles, presentations, conferences, and research) that can support continuous learning. The supporting 2025 Town Hall discussion will be on May 15, 2025.

HOT for 2025

Does Evidence-Based Design (EBD) live up to its expectation?

Much of our overall architectural profession has an artistic nature to it, as designers problem-solve to combine functional, technical and aspirational expression into built solutions. As healthcare architects we take our role of supporting and contributing to overall patient care very seriously. Our considerations are many, and we must respond to the varying operational and technical needs of a space to a campus, considering environmental issues, guided by our understanding of the needs and concerns of the patient, the care givers and the patient’s family/support. Creating supportive and effective environments and spaces is the challenge we embrace.

But how do we know what design elements and solutions are the most effective for our healthcare environments (or if we are doing harm)? Where is the evidence?

Evidence-Based Design (EBD) in healthcare has a wide range of sources of insight, from the early ideas of Florence Nightingale, to the catalytic study by Roger Ulrich in 1984 (re: window views and daylight’s impact on patient recovery), to the more recent work by the Center for Health Design and its Evidence-Based Design Accreditation and Certification (EDAC) program, to the direct feedback and data of healthcare providers. The collection of EBD focused information, articles and post-occupancy evaluations are building a body of knowledge for the profession to leverage.

Healthcare spaces today do not look like the spaces of 25 or 50 years ago, but are they better? Is EBD helping the healthcare architect move the metrics in a positive way? If so, how do we know and can we do better? What is inconclusive and why? Where is the opportunity of EBD?

To help advance a conversation about EBD, its processes and products, we have compiled this brief reading list to support exploration into the topic. Please review

the following articles with that in mind. We encourage our ACHA membership to share any new and additional resources that will add value to the conversation.

Over the course of the year, information will be added to this list from your feedback or the input of others. In addition, look for the **2025 Master's Series** presentations to embrace this topic, as well as the **May 15, 2025 ACHA Town Hall**, which will have a HOT TOPICS focus, and the following guest speakers:

Kirk Hamilton, Emeritus FAIA, Emeritus FACHA (Moderator)
Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University;
Founding Co-Editor, Health Environments Research & Design (HERD) Journal;
Founding Principal, WHR Architects (now EYP/Page);
PhD, MS, B.Arch, EDAC

Jennifer Aliber, FAIA, FACHA (Panelist)
Principal and Healthcare Architect and Planner at Shepley Bulfinch;
M.Arch., BA, LEED AP

Upali Nanda (Panelist)
Executive Vice President and Global Sector Director of Innovation, HKS, Inc.:
Professor of Practice, University of Michigan;
PhD, MA, B.Arch, EDAC

Ellen Taylor, AIA (Panelist)
Co-Editor, Health Environments Research & Design (HERD) Journal;
Vice President for Research, The Center for Health Design;
PhD, MBA, B.Arch, EDAC

Terri Zborowsky (Panelist)
Senior Design Researcher & Vice President at HGA Architects & Engineers;
Foundation Chair, Nursing Institute for Healthcare Design;
PhD, RN, EDAC

FEEDBACK

Your feedback on this content is encouraged. Which articles were most informative or shared a unique perspective? Let us know. Also, if you have articles or other resources to recommend, please share and we will fold them into this source to benefit others (see sub-committee members noted below). We look forward to hearing from you.

QUESTIONS

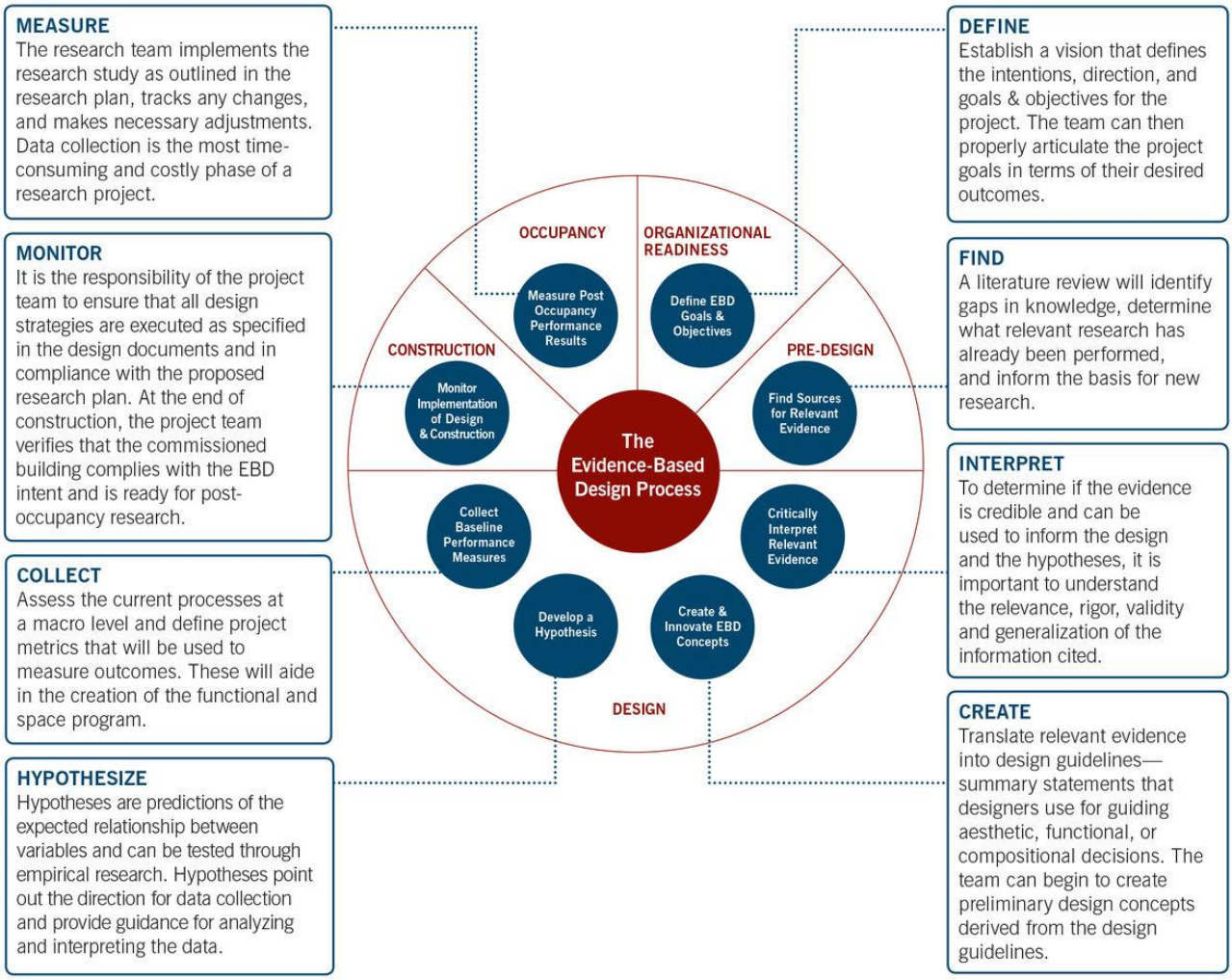
If you have questions you would like to submit prior to the start of the Town Hall, please feel free to share your ideas with the Continuing Competency Committee sub-committee members.

Continuing Competency Committee sub-committee members are:

- **Jenny Cestnik** (jenny.cestnik@zgf.com),
- **Jodi Feldheim** (jodi.feldheim@hdrinc.com),
- **Dan Rectenwald** (djrectenwald61@gmail.com)
- **Mardelle Shepley** (mshepley@cornell.edu)

RESOURCES & ARTICLES

Evidence-Based Design (EBD) is the process of basing decisions about the built environment on credible research to achieve the best possible outcomes. Included in this process are the following eight steps:



The Center for Health Design. About EBD. https://www.healthdesign.org/certification-outreach/edac/about-ebd

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2017). Transforming hospitals: Designing for safety and quality. https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/settings/hospital/resource/transform.html

Atsavapranee E, Heidenreich P, Smith-Bentley M, Vyas A, & Shieh L. (2023). Care to share? Patients in private rooms are more likely to recommend a hospital to others. *Journal of Patient Experience.* https://doi.org/10:23743735231158250. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9972040/

Town Hall Moderator

Hamilton, K. & Pentecost, R. (2024). Evidence-based design and liability risks for health care organizations. *AMA Journal of Ethics*, *26*(12),932-937, https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/evidence-based-design-and-liability-risks-health-care-organizations/2024-12

Herman Miller Healthcare (2011). Research summary: Patient room design: The same-handed, mirror-image debate; https://www.hermanmiller.com/content/dam/hermanmiller/documents/research_summaries/wp_Same_vs_Mirror.pdf

Peavey E. & Vander Wyst, K.B. (2017). Evidence-based design and research-informed design: What's the difference? Conceptual definitions and comparative analysis. *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal*,*10*(5),143-156. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1937586717697683

Quan X., Joseph A., Malone E., & Pati D. (2011). Healthcare environmental terms and outcome measures: An evidence-based design glossary. *The Center for Health Design Research Coalition*. https://www.healthdesign.org/sites/default/files/chd408_researchreportglossary_v6_final_02.pdf

Read, J. & Meath, C. (2025). Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Evidence-Based Design for Aligning Therapeutic and Sustainability Outcomes in Healthcare Facilities: A Systematic Literature Review. *HERD:Health Environments Research and Design Journal*,*18*(1). 86-107. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/19375867241302793

Town Hall Panelist

Taylor, E. (2024). Which values should guide health care organizations' retrofit expenditures on patient-centered and evidence-based design? *AMA Journal of Ethics.* https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/which-values-should-guide-health-care-organizations-retrofit-expenditures-patient-centered-and/2024-12

Ulrich, R.S. (1984). View through a window may influence recovery from surgery. *Science.* 224(4647), 420-421. https://www.science.org/doi/abs/10.1126/science.6143402

Viets, E. (2009). Lessons from evidence-based medicine: What healthcare designers can learn from the medical field. *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal, 2*(2):73-87. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/193758670900200207

Town Hall Panelist

Zborowsky T., Bunker-Hellmich L., Morelli A., O'Neill M. C. (2010). Centralized vs. decentralized nursing stations: Effects on nurses' functional use of space and work environment. *Health Environments Research & Design Journal*, 3(4), 19–42. https://www.proquest.com/openview/ae04ec27cee1235783d61077c3c5afa8/1?cbl=38754&pq-origsite=gscholar