

The Houston Medical Center Bed Tower: Quality and the Built Environment

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ABSTRACT:

When Houston Medical Center in Warner Robins, Georgia, decided to add a new bed tower to their hospital, medication errors and nursing time spent in getting medication received one of the top priorities in their performance matrix. Nurses spend considerable time in medication related activities -- 17.2% according to a recent Ascension Health study (Hendrich, Chow, Skierczynski & Lu, 2008), which does not include time spent walking between the medication room and patient rooms nor time spent queuing in the medication room. Anecdotal evidence suggests that multiple trips to the medication room, environmental chaos, and distractions while preparing medications or on the way, among others, contribute to medication errors. In addition, time spent on trips to a medication room constitutes time away from the patients -- time which could have been spent at the bedside.

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