

# healthcare design



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## GAME ON

*Baylor Scott & White Sports Therapy  
& Research at The Star, Frisco, Texas*

**+ 2019 Product Innovation Awards**



# MONITOR

KEEPING TRACK *of the* INDUSTRY'S VITAL SIGNS → EDITED BY ANNE DINARDO



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## SPACE TO BREATHE

*The Marsal Caregiver Center offers family members a place to recharge as they help loved ones undergoing physical rehabilitation*

A light-filled sunroom offers 180-degree views of the outdoors. Varied seating options range from high- and low-back chairs to an inviting window seat.





within the space and incorporating two small private rooms. “Real life hasn’t stopped for the caregivers,” Assenza says. “They expressed the need for private space to meet with family members, discuss care with hospital staff, or just take a moment for themselves.”

The centerpiece of the \$626,000 project is a sunroom with a round dome-topped skylight and a 180-degree curved wall of windows fronting a lush landscape. Through a pair of translucent sliding doors is the living room, with works by local artists hanging on the walls and a decorative light fixture hanging over a long communal table. Two resource stations with computers are available for those seeking more care-related information, while a nearby kitchenette provides a space for a fresh cup of coffee. “The space has a very different feel from the rest of the hospital,” says Assenza, who notes that the project was a rare improvement opportunity that wasn’t revenue-driven. “When visitors enter, you can just see them breathe differently.” —*Jennifer Salopek, freelance writer*

**F**AMILY MEMBERS whose loved ones are admitted to physical rehabilitation hospitals face daunting challenges, including the possibility of a very different life when returning home. More immediately, though, they must handle long hours in a rehab facility as patients recover, including daily therapy sessions. Recognizing that caregivers need care, too, Burke Rehabilitation Hospital in White Plains, N.Y., created the Marsal Caregiver Center, which opened in June 2018 to provide clinical and social services while also offering a place of respite for caregivers only. “We hope that a calmer mindset and sense of being will help them embrace the changes that await,” says Carla Assenza, a social worker and director of the Marsal Caregiver Center.

Working with EwingCole (New York), the hospital sought to renovate a former lounge into an 1,845-square-foot oasis using materials and colors that connect the interior with the natural landscape. The materials palette includes stone and wood complemented by hues of gray, blue, brown, and green. Located on the first floor near the cafeteria, the center’s entrance features a curved marble-look wall with glass doors leading to a greeter station staffed by volunteers. A woven tapestry backdrop in shades of blue evokes calming lake and mountain images, while a cheerful light fixture overhead resembles gingko leaves. To the right, a wall of built-in cabinets and bookshelves is stocked with resource materials. “Textures were very important. We wanted to engage all the senses but avoided too many contrasting colors due to the older average age of the visitors,” says Sophie Buttiens, principal in charge of the project for EwingCole.

Furnishings and other elements inside the center were extensively tested with focus groups, including former caregivers and the lead donors, Bryan and Kathleen Marsal, who weighed in on key decisions such as eliminating televisions

**ABOVE:** Staffed by care ambassadors, the front desk features a nature-inspired lighting fixture as a focal point and a soothing woven backdrop. **RIGHT:** Before its renovation into the Marsal Caregiver Center, the 1918 parlor at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital had an institutional feel. **BELOW:** The living room features two gathering areas, resource stations with computers, and a kitchenette with complimentary beverages and snacks.

