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► DaVita Kidney Care's in-center dialysis facilities provide amenities and comfort similar to many retail experiences.

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The Dirty Details  
of Disinfecting  
Managing  
Hazardous Waste

## Healthy Competition

HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS ARE LOOKING  
A LOT LIKE RETAIL STORES — AND  
CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR FMs ALONG THE WAY.





Most Americans  
are dissatisfied with  
their healthcare  
experiences.  
Could the cure for  
what ails them be a  
retail state of mind?

**BY MATT ALDERTON**

# Healthy Competition

The phrase “retail therapy” notwithstanding, retail stores bear little resemblance to healthcare systems. Healthcare systems, however, are beginning to look a lot like retail stores thanks to a growing movement that’s remaking healthcare in the mold of consumers — and creating new opportunities for facility managers in the process.

The movement’s genesis is a systemic shortcoming: Although healthcare is supposed to be a service, to patients it often feels like a shakedown.

“Consumers want more from the healthcare industry,” management consultancy McKinsey & Company observed in its 2018 report *Healthcare Consumerism 2018: An Update on the Journey*. The report cites results

from a 2017 survey in which it asked consumers what would make a healthcare company “the best.” Top answers included coverage (23%), customer service (11%), cost (7%) and access (6%).

“Such basic ‘asks’ would be unheard of in most industries,” continued McKinsey & Company, which also asked respondents which companies healthcare organizations should emulate. “They selected tech-focused innovators such as Amazon, Google and Apple, as well as high-performing retailers ... The types of interactions and relationships consumers have with these companies strongly suggest what they want from healthcare organizations.”

Because retailers are their role models, retail facility managers are ideally positioned to help healthcare disruptors execute the changes patients demand.

## DOCTOR’S ADVICE



FMs in the healthcare arena know that responsibilities and duties may need adjusting from traditional retail settings. To help familiarize FMs with these adaptations, Connex spoke with Joshua Kugler, M.D., the new Executive Director of Ferrandino and Son’s Healthcare Division. Dr. Kugler has 20 years of experience in the healthcare industry and currently holds the title of Chairman, Department of Emergency Medicine, for Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital in Oceanside, NY. He provided five tips that FMs should keep in mind when operating in the healthcare field.

**1 A HEALTHCARE FACILITY IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING** — This requires a regular life safety assessment of the facility. A building built in 1995 is now being used in a way differently than what it was designed for. If your program doesn’t include an auditor who is experienced in the Life Safety Code and building code requirements, as well as those of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, you are putting your entire facility program in jeopardy.

**2 DEVELOP AN ABOVE-THE-CEILING INSPECTION PROCESS** — Healthcare facilities are prone to citations due to issues around incorrect penetrations of fire-and-smoke barriers, incorrect application of fire-and-smoke barriers, issues around wiring or utilities touching piping and more than a dozen other risk opportunities.

**3 ITM DOCUMENTATION** — Inspected, tested and maintained are the drivers of compliance in healthcare. Everything from code requirements to poor inventory to lack of proper documentation are all inherent risks of a poorly run healthcare facility program.

**4 IGNORING IT DOESN’T MAKE IT GO AWAY** — The risk of ignoring a safety issue like a bad closer on a fire door not only jeopardizes the safety of your patients and employees, it also leads to fines and penalties when discovered and opens up your facilities to future audits and reviews.

**5 ORGANIZATION** — In the multi-site healthcare facility industry, working with hundreds of thousands of suppliers is simply too risky. You need an organized facility program, and that requires a program managed by dozens of partners, not hundreds. This type of consolidation will drive transparency and consistency across your entire footprint.



#### NEW LOOK

CVS has introduced new HealthHUB services that have the look and feel of a traditional doctor's office.

Company, whose aforementioned survey found a dramatic increase in the number of consumers who have used retail clinics, up from just 9% in 2013 to 24% in 2017. An even higher number — more than four-fifths of consumers — said they were willing to receive care at a retail clinic, even if they hadn't done so yet.

#### Patients First

For consumers and patients, retail healthcare can be more affordable, more accessible and more personal than traditional healthcare. But the benefits aren't a given. Rather, they're the product of dedicated teams whose members, including facility managers, have a retail mindset.

The core tenet of that mindset is customer service, according to Connex Board Chair Myriah Kingen, Director of Facilities Management at DaVita Kidney Care, which provides dialysis treatment to patients at more than 2,600 retail locations nationwide. "Our patients are in our clinics for treatment three days a week for three to four hours a day,"

Kingen said. "They often consider the clinic as their second home, so it's really important we provide a positive patient experience every single day. If we do, they'll continue coming back to our facilities and hopefully extend their lives."

Facility managers can contribute to a positive patient experience in myriad ways. One, for example, is conscientious scheduling for repairs and other maintenance requests. "We're very cognizant of making sure we're not getting in the way of treatment," Kingen said. "Unless there's a critical issue that could shut down the clinic, we never have contractors on the treatment floor when patients are there."

At DaVita and other retail healthcare providers, work typically takes place after-hours. "Because we don't want to disrupt the customers' experience, 90% of our work — repairs, carpet cleaning, etc. — is done at night, when the store is closed," said National Vision's Campbell.



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Although it can feel at odds with sensitive scheduling, a sense of urgency also is important for facility managers in retail healthcare settings, where the stakes of unresolved maintenance requests can be higher than in traditional retail settings.

At Heartland Dental, which provides nonclinical, administrative support services to 1,400 dentists in 37 states, field visits are an important strategy that keeps facility managers in tune with practitioners and patients. “Our internal team members get out in the field to actually experience what’s going on in dental offices — not so much to look at what repairs and maintenance are needed, but to see how offices operate so we can understand how our work affects the patient experience,” explained Kenneth Jones, Senior Facilities Manager. “We talk to the dentists and we listen to their needs. For example, we want to fix things, but it may be better to fix them on a Friday when the dentist isn’t seeing patients.”

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At National Vision, for example, plumbing is mission-critical. “It’s essential we have running water because we have customers putting contact lenses in,” Campbell said. “We can’t operate a store without it.”

Even something as small as a burnt-out light bulb can be consequential. “If you’re getting dialysis, what are you going to be staring at for three hours? That dang light bulb,” explained Kingen, who said other seemingly small things can have big ramifications, like a chipped countertop, which can become a breeding ground for infectious bacteria and will therefore attract attention from state inspectors. “We have to make sure we’re timely about getting things done that are important.”

## Compliant Care

Speaking of inspectors: If the patient experience is one driver for FMs in retail healthcare, another is compliance, according to Jones, who said facilities must pay close attention to regulations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which advises against carpeting in dental operatories, for example; the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which prescribes specific procedures and equipment for the safe handling and disposal of medical waste; and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), which oversees the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requiring healthcare providers to safeguard patients’ private medical information.

While most retail healthcare providers have dedicated compliance professionals who are charged with learning, communicating and implementing regulatory compliance, FMs also have a role to play — particularly in the area of vendor sourcing and management.

“The biggest thing we have to worry about is HIPAA,” stressed

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Kingen, who said DaVita requires all vendors to receive HIPAA training and certification, and to sign a master service agreement in which they certify that they're HIPAA-compliant.

Although it helps, vendors don't have to have prior healthcare experience as long as they're willing to learn, said Jones, whose company regularly provides live and virtual compliance training for both internal and external personnel.

One thing FMs in retail healthcare typically don't have to concern themselves with is specialized medical equipment. Although their facilities can be brimming with such equipment, retail healthcare providers generally have a separate department tasked with managing and maintaining it. At National Vision, for example, that's the field services department, and at DaVita it's the biomedical team.

"Having a dedicated in-house team to manage that equipment is critical," said Kingen, who must coordinate closely with her biomedical counterpart in order to schedule and execute projects that require repairing or moving medical equipment. "My team just has to understand what it can and can't touch."

## Opportunities Ahead

Because they don't need special medical knowledge or experience, FMs can float easily between traditional retail and retail healthcare, according to Kingen. "We're all doing the same thing; it's just the shell in which we're working that's different," she said.

That means facility managers can pursue new opportunities in retail healthcare when opportunities in conventional retail are scant, and vice versa.

It's not just about the quantity of available jobs, however. It's also about the quality of available jobs. Retail healthcare can be particularly



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attractive, for example, to FMs who derive job satisfaction from having business impact, like sustainability. Because healthcare operations typically consume a lot of resources, FMs who migrate to retail healthcare positions will be well positioned to make positive impacts on both the environment and the business as stewards of water- and energy-management programs. Because dialysis treatments run on water, DaVita alone uses nearly three billion gallons of water per year.

To Kingen, however, the best part about working in retail healthcare isn't the impact she has on the planet or on profits. Rather, it's the impact she has on people. "It's a really humbling experience to work every day in a healthcare environment, knowing that you're making a difference in patients' lives," she said. "It's very satisfying, and it's completely different than anything I ever experienced when I was working in a more traditional retail environment." ❧

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