

The design of a health care facility can either promote healing or get in the way of it. Hospitals are upgrading their facilities to look more like hotels because furnishings are proven to help improve the therapeutic healing process and promote a sense of well-being among patients and staff. There are a vast number of floor coverings available to designers and specifiers, from sheet vinyl to terrazzo, luxury vinyl tile to rubber, wood flooring to carpet. Carpet is generally seen by patients and staff alike to be more luxurious than most other materials. Carpet provides beauty, comfort, and a cozier feeling for everyone who enters.

Yet many hospitals, nursing homes, extended care facilities, etc. are faced with a dilemma when the time comes to install or replace the flooring. While hard surface flooring, like resilient sheet goods, are required for sensitive areas like operating rooms and treatment areas, carpet can be a viable choice for patient rooms, common areas, and hallways. And with backings like Mannington's Integra HP RE moisture barrier broadloom, carpet is easily maintained and even disinfected. Even the Facility Guidelines Institute (FGI) states in their Guidelines for Design and Construction of Healthcare Facilities, "Carpet should not be automatically discounted as inappropriate ... as it has major advantages over hard-surface flooring in terms of noise reduction, acoustics, and residential appearance, all of which are important in creating a comfortable, attractive living environment for patients." (Part Three, Appendix A3.1-7.2.3.2 [1])

Carpet greatly enhances the appearance and atmosphere of a healthcare facility. It adds to patient comfort by reducing the coldness at floor level, reducing reflected glare, and absorbing the noise of hospital activity. And carpet makes any room's appearance more inviting; it is comforting and warm. However, another objection to carpet is that while its use in patient rooms is desirable, it simply cannot be used everywhere in a hospital. Corridors, treatment rooms, operating rooms, etc. require a hard surface flooring. The transition strips that are required where the patient rooms meet the treatment rooms or hallways can not only be a trip hazard, but are also difficult to maneuver wheeled beds and chairs over for the staff.

This is one area where Mannington has decidedly beaten all of our competition. Our Integra HP RE broadloom carpet backing is able to be chemically welded to our resilient sheet goods. This means that no bulky transition strip that can cause a trip hazard is necessary. And because the seams of the carpet and the sheet goods are chemically welded together, it creates a completely aseptic, impermeable moisture barrier.

Integra HP RE is Mannington Commercial's high performance integrated broadloom backing with environmental attributes including 10% post-consumer recycled content. In addition to having the option of being chemically welded to itself or surrounding sheet flooring, it is available in 9' & 12' (widths for corridors), resists delamination, edge ravel, moisture penetration, pilling and fuzzing, and withstands aggressive wet cleanings. Integra HP RE has lifetime wear and backing warranties and is third party certified environmentally preferable achieving NSF/ANSI 140 Platinum level. Mannington's Integra HP RE carpets also can aid in the functionality of a healthcare environment:

"Identify the characteristics that the flooring should have to protect residents/patients and staff. Examples of issues to consider include: ...Ensuring a smooth transition between different types of flooring ... meeting infection control and housekeeping needs." (Public Services Health & Safety Association, "Ergonomic Tips for Resident or Patient Bathrooms")

Flooring transition strips can be a breeding ground for infection and bacterial growth. For example: "Surfaces that are porous or textured may be difficult to clean and might therefore harbor potentially pathogenic microbes. ...survival of these pathogens for even a short time increases the possibility of their being acquired by patients or health-care workers and spread from one person to the next." (Engineering Infection Control through Facility Design: Hospital Environment as a Risk for Infection," Noskin & Peterson) In other words, areas that are difficult to clean, such as under transition strips, can increase the possibility of pathogen transmission through the facility.

The CDC guidelines for cleaning infectious spills include: "Recommended practices for managing large spills of concentrated infectious agents in the laboratory include a) confining the contaminated area, b) flooding the area with a liquid chemical germicide before cleaning, and c) decontaminating with fresh germicidal chemical of at least intermediate-level disinfectant potency." (Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities, Recommendations of the CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee, 2003, page 78) Another CDC guideline outlines the importance of proper and thorough cleaning after an infectious spill: "In tissue-culture fluid, cell-free HIV could be detected up to 15 days at room temperature, up to 11 days at 37 C (98.6 F), and up to 1 day if the HIV was cell-associated. ...In patient-care areas, visible material should first be removed and then the area should be decontaminated. With large spills of cultured or concentrated infectious agents in the laboratory, the contaminated area should be flooded with a liquid germicide before cleaning, then decontaminated with fresh germicidal chemical." (CDC "Recommendations for Prevention of HIV Transmission in Health-Care Settings")

These contaminating spills could reach under the transition strip, but there is no guarantee that the cleaning methods outlined above will also reach under the transition strip area. Any blood spill under the transition strip could remain after a standard cleaning procedure, and HIV could remain active up to 15 days under transitions. To ensure effective decontamination, the transition strip would have to be removed, exposing the seam area, and potentially causing a flooring failure when the floor is flooded with chemicals. This procedure is simply not necessary with an installation of Integra HP RE carpet from Mannington if the seams are chemically welded to the surrounding flooring.

Integra HP RE Performance Attributes:

- Impermeable moisture barrier
- Eliminates wick-back staining
- Superior tuft bind wet or dry
- Superior dimensional stability
- Passes British Spill and Moisture Impact tests
- Flexible in hot and cold environments
- Can be chemically welded to itself or sheet vinyl for an aseptic barrier
- Withstands aggressive wet cleanings
- 12' and 9' widths (for corridors)
- Resists edge ravel and delamination
- Lifetime Limited Warranty

Integra HP RE Environmental Attributes:

- Contains a minimum of 10% post-consumer recycled content by total product weight
- Certified to NSF/ANSI-140 Platinum
- CRI Green Label Plus Certified
- Adhesives meet VOC content limit of SCAQMD Rule #1168
- Fully recyclable via LOOP
- ISO 14001 registered manufacturing facility
- Contributes to LEED credits