A Black female healthcare professional is shown in profile, facing right. She has short, dark hair and is wearing dark blue scrubs. A stethoscope is draped around her neck, with the chest piece visible in the lower left. The background is a solid dark grey.

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Creating a Better Experience for  
Caregivers at the Point of Care



The consumerization of the healthcare industry and the rise of value-based payment models are encouraging many healthcare organizations to put greater focus on the experience at the point of care. Much of the focus has been on patients, viewing them as customers and ensuring they are comfortable and pleased with the point of care visit and interaction. But, it's important to realize the experience of the caregiver is an equally important factor in the delivery of care.



In fact, there is growing consensus within the healthcare industry that the caregiver/provider experience not only affects the well-being of the provider, but can also impact the quality of care provided to patients. [A recent survey conducted by Medscape](#) revealed that nearly two-thirds of U.S. doctors feel burned out and/or depressed, and those feelings affect how they relate to patients: “One in three depressed doctors said they were more easily exasperated by patients; 32 percent said they were less engaged with their patients; and 29 percent acknowledged being less friendly.”

This cuts to the very heart of the point of care experience – the relationship and interaction between the patient and the caregiver that is built on a foundation of trust, engagement, and understanding. This can be easily damaged if the caregiver experience is lacking, and this in turn [can significantly impact the quality of care experience](#).

While there are a number of factors that impact the caregiver experience, equipment and room design offer some of the most direct simple solutions. Following are three critical factors connected to the provider experience and suggestions on how equipment and room design decisions can improve the provider experience at the point of care.

# Ergonomics



Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for many caregivers to go home at the end of their shift with back pain, aching necks, and sore muscles and joints. This is often the result of caregivers having to continuously work in uncomfortable positions utilizing poor ergonomics while entering information into electronic medical records, accessing supplies or interacting with patients.

Here are a few suggestions how equipment and room design decisions can help incorporate ergonomic principles to benefit caregivers:

- Fully adjustable exam and procedure chairs give caregivers unobstructed access to patients during exams and procedures, eliminating the need for overreach and awkward postures.
- Adjustable workstations allow caregivers to maintain a proper, ergonomic working position while still keeping eye contact with the patient.
- Counterbalanced overhead lighting that is easy to maneuver without strain.
- Stools that are easily adjustable and maneuverable to allow caregivers to find the most comfortable working height and maintain neutral postures.

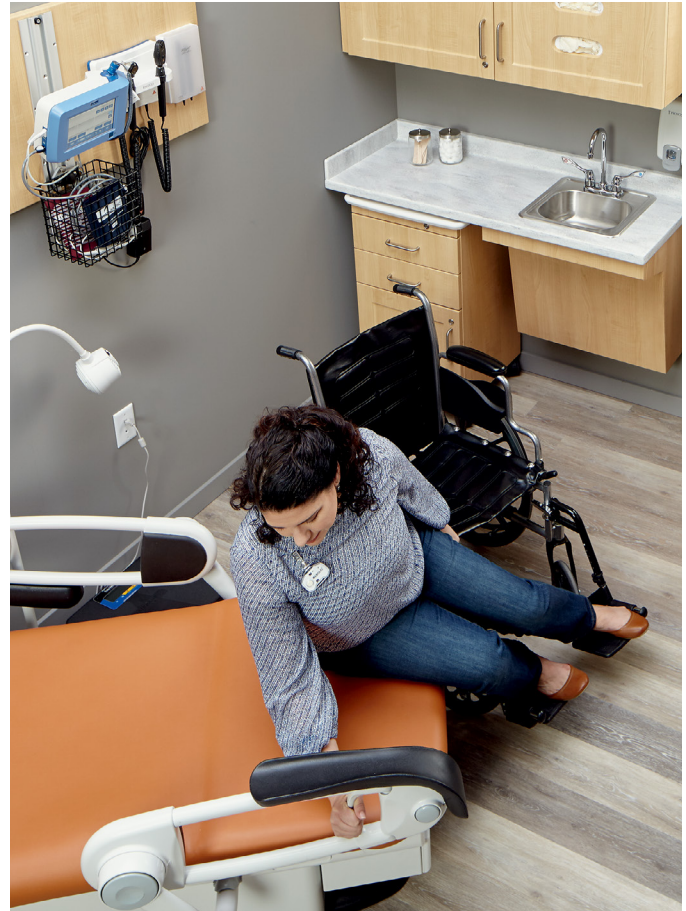
Comfort is a basic human need, that when met, can help put someone at ease, foster efficient performance and help facilitate a pleasant experience. These results are especially important in a healthcare environment to ensure efficient patient care.

# Safety

No one wants to work in an unsafe environment. Safety concerns within outpatient facilities can quickly lead to liability issues or, at the very least, dissatisfied staff. Safety issues can include everything from difficulty in assisting a patient with mobility issues and straining to reach supplies located at the back of a cabinet to risking possible infection from contaminants and tripping over a piece of equipment in a cluttered room. A safe environment is conducive to a pleasant experience for everyone.

Here is how a few equipment and room design decisions can help create a safer point of care for caregivers:

- Exam chairs with a seat height of 15.5" allow patients to transfer to the chair with little or no assistance from caregivers, helping maintain the patient's confidence and dignity and preventing caregiver injury from lifts or strain.
- Cabinetry that is created specifically for the medical environment features an easy-to-clean seamless design and antimicrobial pulls and surfaces that protect from infections.
- Proper height levels for cabinets ensure caregivers of varying size can easily reach supplies.
- A decluttered environment with equipment and supplies stored out of sight until needed helps prevent tripping hazards.



# Efficiency



An inefficient point of care environment is often a main contributor to physician/caregiver burnout.

Inefficiencies mean caregivers have to work longer or harder to accomplish tasks and provide care. While sometimes these inefficiencies are minor, they can compound throughout the day and week. It often means caregivers easily get behind schedule with patient visits, causing undue stress and a sense of helplessness on the part of caregiver as they deal with not enough hours in the day and frustrated patients.

Here are a few examples illustrating how equipment and room design can help create a more efficient environment:

- Mobile or wall-mounted workstations bring information and technology within arm's reach, decreasing the caregiver's need to move within the space and maximizing engagement with patients.
- Workflows and equipment offer the flexibility to address future needs and growth strategies.
- Exam rooms large enough to comfortably accommodate patients and caregivers allowing exams and procedures to be properly and efficiently performed.
- Cabinetry with modular design allows caregivers to easily configure workspace components to fit workflow and maximize workspace.

With ever-increasing emphasis on the point of care experience, equipment and exam room design have evolved into strategic components of the delivery of care. The right equipment and exam room design decisions can create a safer, more comfortable and more efficient point of care environment resulting in a better experience for both the patient and care provider.

For additional information on the caregiver experience, visit [midmark.com](https://www.midmark.com).



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