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Point of Care Inventory Control:  
A Place for Everything and  
Everything in its Place



Our Midmark design experts visit numerous exam rooms and healthcare facilities each year. We speak with clinicians across the US to determine point of care issues that are not being addressed and identify products and features that we could introduce or enhance to address these issues.

One of the main issues clinicians constantly encounter, whether it is in regard to ergonomics or efficiency and productivity, is the need for adequate, accessible storage at the point of care. Many non-acute facilities have limited storage space depending on the size and configuration of the exam rooms, which can often have a negative impact on patient and caregiver experience and the quality of care delivered.

Fortunately, there are a number of storage options available today that can easily integrate into exam room configurations and workflows, increasing storage space and bringing supplies to the point of care.

# The Cost of Inadequate Storage

There are a number of reasons many healthcare facilities and organizations are challenged with inadequate and inaccessible storage space. This can include storage not being a major consideration during the design phase, an older facility that was not originally designed to handle continued growth and increased patient volume, cabinetry and storage solutions not designed for the medical environment, and a changing patient and provider demographic that interacts with the space and equipment in a much different way.

Regardless of the reason, the cost of inadequate storage can be far-reaching and negatively impact both clinical staff and patients.

## Impact on clinical staff

Often, the most overlooked impact of having inadequate, inaccessible storage at the point of care has traditionally been that which is felt by the clinical staff. However, growing attention placed on clinical design is helping shine a spotlight on the comfort and well-being of caregivers and clinical staff.

Clinical work is demanding and can be physically strenuous. It is not uncommon for caregivers to go home at the end of their shifts with back pain, aching necks, and sore muscles and joints. These physical aches and pains often are the result of having to continuously work in uncomfortable positions or straining to reach supplies. It is not surprising that healthcare workers are **three times more likely to suffer from work-related injuries than construction workers**.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, **76% of healthcare workers are female**, while the **average height of females in the US is just under 5'4"**. Unfortunately, the typical cabinetry found in clinical environments is often not designed for them. In many instances, they are forced to strain and use stools or other devices to see or reach supplies on upper shelves of cabinetry.

Inadequate storage can also have a negative impact on productivity levels. Along with having to work in cluttered spaces, clinical staff also have to contend with unorganized inventory. Additionally, needed supplies are often stored outside the point of care because of limited storage space or valuable storage space being unused because it is out of reach.

As a result, caregivers can find it hard to tell when supplies are running low and often have to spend extra time going to an overflow closet or cabinet to find the needed item(s). Although **one study** estimated that nurses spend approximately 7% of their time searching for supplies, **Johns Hopkins Hospital estimated that these activities take 20% of nurse time**.

## Impact on patients

While patient satisfaction and patient experience are not new concepts, today's value-based care environment emphasizes the importance of the patient experience in the healthcare journey. Patient experience and patient satisfaction have both become valuable tools in helping healthcare organizations determine and measure quality of care and critical components of evidence-based outcomes. Patient satisfaction surveys help healthcare organizations identify opportunities to improve the clinical environment and demonstrate to their patients that they are focused on quality of care. As is often the case, patient perception can affect the overall patient experience and degree of satisfaction.

Patients want assurances that steps are being taken to create a safe and inviting healthcare environment that can assist with providing quality care. At first it may not seem obvious, but inadequate storage at the point of care can have a negative impact on patient perception. At a very basic level, cluttered areas and supplies strewn across the exam room can appear unprofessional, unorganized and even dirty. This image can have an overall effect on how patients view the quality of care offered at the facility.

Cluttered environments and storage options that take up a lot of valuable space can also exacerbate accessibility issues, making it difficult for patients with mobility limitations (e.g., when using a wheelchair or walker) to safely navigate within the facility and exam room.

As mentioned in the previous section, inadequate and inaccessible storage can contribute to caregiver fatigue and injuries. There is growing consensus within healthcare that the caregiver experience not only affects the well-being of the caregiver, but can also impact the quality of care provided to patients. A [survey conducted by Medscape](#) revealed that nearly two-thirds of doctors in the US 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% said they were less engaged with their patients; and 29% 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 relationship can be easily damaged if the caregiver experience is lacking and can, in turn, [significantly impact the quality of the patient experience](#).





# Designing a Way Forward

As a leading medical solutions provider focused on the design of the clinical environment to improve the healthcare experience, Midmark works closely with healthcare staff and ergonomic experts to design exam room equipment that adapts to the needs of clinical staff and non-acute environments.

Our design experts employ an evidence-based design (EBD) approach to create equipment that maximizes floor space and enhances storage efficiency and accessibility to help improve clinical workflow and standardize storage management at the point of care.

## Cabinetry

Synthesis® Wall-Hung Cabinetry, part of the Synthesis Cabinetry Collection by Midmark, is designed for caregivers who interact with the cabinetry in the medical space, incorporating ergonomic principles to help create a better caregiver experience at the point of care. The Midmark line of cabinetry features base and tall cabinets that better position the most-used storage areas for easier reach by physicians and staff.

Cabinets with lower upper height and thinner depth improve access to storage with less reach and lean required, while the use of gravity-fed, angled flow shelving improves visibility and access to supplies stored toward the back of the cabinet.



## Mobile Workstations

Midmark® Mobile Workstations are designed to strengthen patient-caregiver interaction by supporting a seamless experience at the point of care, wherever that may be. Mobile workstations allow clinicians to make the most of their space while maintaining their focus on the patient, helping keep patient experience and interaction top of mind as opportunities for efficiency gains are considered and implemented.

The mobility aspect of these workstations provide flexibility to easily customize rooms and take space-saving measures. Mobile workstations can be easily moved from room to room or within the room to meet the needs of the provider and the patient.



## Mobile Procedure Carts

Midmark® Synthesis Mobile Procedure Carts are designed to assist in supply access and storage within the exam room, as well as serve as an additional work surface positioned left or right of the caregiver. They also allow for sturdy room-to-room maneuverability and can be customized for specific workflows and procedures, offering an optimal platform for supporting the delivery of care and making the most of available space. Through a number of optional features, including storage racks, glove holders and mounting accessories, mobile procedure carts can be designed to support various clinical workflows and maximize storage.



## Mobile Treatment Cabinets

Midmark® Synthesis Mobile Treatment Cabinets are designed to bring supplies and instruments to the care zone, minimizing the need for the provider to move away from the patient and acting as a central hub for specific tasks at the point of care. Specialized designs help eliminate dead space and improve organization. When it is not in use, the mobile cabinet can be easily stored out of the way. Multiple sizes, drawer/door configurations and accessories help create an effective supply storage option without detracting from valuable floor space at the point of care.



# Rethinking Your Storage Options

As the role of clinical design continues to gain prominence in non-acute care, a cluttered exam room with unorganized supplies and inefficiently used storage space can be a thing of the past. A growing number of storage options makes now an ideal time to take a more strategic approach with your point of care storage. By standardizing and organizing your storage more effectively, you'll not only be creating a better healthcare experience for clinical staff and patients, but also helping improve the quality (and perceived quality) of care delivered.

Contact us to learn how Midmark can help with your clinical storage needs.





Designing better care.®