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EMD Serono received 2018 Green Building of the Year and Market Leader in Health and Wellness Awards from USGBC

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Billerica, MA EMD Serono's Project SagaMORE has received both the 2018 Green Building of the Year and the Market Leader in Health and Wellness Awards from the USGBC Massachusetts. It is a 30,000 s/f expansion to EMD's R&D campus. The existing office building and addition have jointly achieved WELL Gold certification for New & Existing Construction from the International Well Building Institute (IWBI). It is the first New & Existing Building WELL Certified Gold project in the U.S. and only the second in the world.

In 2015, Project Sagamore renovations transformed an existing manufacturing plant on the campus into 24,000 s/f of new office space for 200 researchers. Guided by EMD's Four C's of Choice, Comfort, Collaboration, and Challenging the norms, the company aspired to provide a best-in-class workspace to retain and attract industry talent. That project achieved LEED Platinum certification and incorporated many goals of the WELL certification program, which did not exist at the time. Major design features included promoting the use of stairs rather than elevators, natural daylight and outdoor views, ergonomics, and a sense of place. This renovation quickly became the most popular research office space on campus.

As a result of the project's success, and the need for even more office space, Ellenzweig and Intec designed an addition that more than doubles the 2015 office renovation. Named Project SagaMORE, its design challenge was to further improve on the design successes of Project Sagamore while achieving both WELL and LEED certification.

As a pharmaceutical company, EMD is committed to health regeneration. That ethos inspired a

biophilic design solution that both physically and metaphorically manifests itself in the new addition. As a result, health and wellness features and amenities are found throughout the project. Central to the new facility is the lobby commons that sits between the original and new office buildings. It features a prominent “river” of planting that wends its way from the exterior entry plaza into, and through, the space. Alongside that planting, a prominent stepped seating staircase invites walking to the second floor rather than opting for the elevator. A café, alcove and countertop seating, as well as huddle rooms round out the wide variety of collaborative and quiet gathering spaces that surround the commons. All of these spaces are naturally day-lit in combination with circadian rhythm LED lighting.

Fundamental to both the lobby commons and other neighborhoods in the building, is visual connection to the outdoor landscape, and access to a wide variety of workspace environments. For instance, people can be extroverted or introverted; some tasks require isolated concentration, others spirited collaboration. As result, SagaMORE includes dedicated open-office sit-stand desks, private hoteling offices, telephone rooms, huddle rooms, conference rooms, banquet booths, quiet rooms, and outdoor workspaces. This humane variety of spaces that focus on well-being has demonstrably increased overall employee engagement.

Deeply integrated into the interior, as well as exterior entry elements, is the lively incorporation of EMD’s Merck corporate branding graphics that are based on a visual language of monochromatic cellular shapes and bright accent colors.

The SagaMORE project incorporates low-VOC emitting interior furnishings and finishes; high-efficiency LED interior lighting that promotes proper circadian rhythms; planters full of natural vegetation. The campus does not provide, or make available, any food or beverages containing trans fats or with a high or sugar content (such as soda or junk food) within the facility or its vending machines.

The design and construction team for EMD’s Project SagaMORE understood that the products and materials specified and installed would eventually need to pass performance verification to achieve WELL certification. As a result, everyone understood that all planning decisions would influence the project’s potential to become a certified building. To that end, its successful passing of the performance verification was an accomplishment not only for the design team, but also for the occupants.

WELL goes beyond designing healthy spaces—it drives building operators to facilitate occupant exercise and behavior. Projects that provide outdoor gardening space and support, or provide alternative commuter facilities (i.e. bike storage and showers) and organizations that incentivize physical activities are just a few of the ways WELL works to improve building occupant health. The implementation of WELL features demonstrate how buildings can, and should improve occupant health. WELL v1 is organized into seven concepts: Air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort, and mind, and certification is performance based.

The SagaMORE project at EMD Serono is currently pending LEED NC certification. It is expected to

achieve a Gold rating with 42% water use reduction, 30% energy cost reduction, and 82% reduction in construction waste.

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