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Margulies Perruzzi's Home Base Veteran project recognized by CoreNet and IFMA

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Boston, MA Margulies Perruzzi's high performance clinical workplace design for the Home Base Veteran and Family Care Center has been honored with awards from CoreNet Global New England and IFMA Boston. Home Base, a Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Program, received the CoreNet Global New England 2019 Award of Excellence, Best New Small Workplace and the IFMA Boston 2019 Best Practice Award of Excellence, Medium Project.

Completed in 2018, Home Base's new 26,422 s/f facility in Charlestown, Mass. doubles the organization's program capacity and delivers a broad range of key innovations to its facility design, providing the space and resources needed to significantly enhance the mental healthcare and support services provided to U.S. service members, veterans, and their families dealing with "invisible wounds." The new facility also combines wellness, nutrition and fitness into a first-of-its-kind brain health center.

Founded in 2009, Home Base is dedicated to healing the invisible wounds, such as traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, and related mental health conditions, for veterans, service members, and their families through world-class clinical care, wellness, education, and research. In 2010, MPA designed Home Base's first program facility at 101 Merrimac Street in Boston. Home Base's steady 10-year growth since had split clinic operations over several sites, necessitating an expanded facility to respond to the growing demand for its programs and services. With the primary goal of designing a healing, transformative space specifically tailored to patients' needs, the design challenge was to deliver a facility that transcended the typical clinical environment while providing flexibility for current needs and future program expansion.

"Home Base is the first and largest private-sector clinic in the nation devoted to helping at-risk veterans and military families regain the lives they once had. Our new home allows us to finally match the top quality of care at Home Base with the space and environment that surrounds it," said Home Base Executive Director Brigadier General (ret.) Jack Hammond. "As our design partner, MP collaborated with us through an evolutionary process of discovery to create this new center, enabling us to scale our innovative and effective approach to mental health and brain injury care for more veterans, service members, and their families."

Home Base's touted "National Center of Excellence" reflects a powerful, national shift in the delivery

of clinical care and design for the patient experience. The design concept creates a behavioral health environment in a high-performance design that provides flexible space with robust technology; promotes a comfortable and peaceful environment; and maximizes privacy for clinical operations. The staff aspect of the workspace is populated with open benched workstations, casual break-out areas, and small enclosed work settings, offering staff a choice of spaces to work. The clinical side includes 20 individual therapy rooms, three large group therapy rooms, and a patient/family lounge. All therapy rooms are unassigned, online-bookable consult spaces for clinicians, who readily deviated from the private office model in favor of sharing treatment and respite areas with patients.

“We are part of a movement here, providing spaces designed for health care providers to meet the complex needs of a vast veteran population,” said Jason Costello, partner/associate principal at Margulies Perruzzi. “Understanding the patient experience is an important step in designing a facility that is respectful and responsive to individual patient’s preferences, needs and values. We (the teams at MP) are listening to the bigger conversations nationally and working to address these unique issues, as observed in the new Home Base Center.”

Counseling rooms have a residential, less clinical aesthetic featuring wood paneling, casual seating, and area rugs, allowing patients to feel more relaxed during treatment. Lounge spaces are conveniently located for patients amidst clusters of consult rooms. To protect patient confidentiality during therapy sessions, all patient-oriented treatment spaces feature motorized blinds and sound-masking. The three, glass-fronted large group therapy rooms include privacy glass that turns opaque at the flip of a switch. Additionally, two “sky wall dividers” – moveable partitions that roll up into the ceiling – allow these rooms to expand into a larger space for clinical program graduations and other group functions. A palette of subdued colors and natural wood fosters a calming and healing environment throughout the center.

Beyond facility consolidation, Home Base was able to expand its program offerings by adding non-traditional treatment spaces for fitness and art/music therapies and a demonstration kitchen to teach dietary health and wellness. A multi-purpose room is acoustically designed for music therapy, outfitted with a utility sink for art therapy, and appropriately sized for group yoga. An open stair was created to allow for better flow and communication to the second floor traumatic brain injury treatment center with three exam rooms, a fitness center, and a training kitchen.

CoreNet Global New England’s annual Best New Workplace Awards are given to projects that align with the CRE business drivers and support the organization’s mission with the use of real estate, innovations in design, functionality and technology. IFMA Boston’s Best Practice Awards are given to projects that have had a substantial, positive effect on the success of the organization and demonstrate how the project impacted business objectives and contributed to improved success by going “above and beyond” the normal project scope.

The project team for Home Base includes:

- Architect/Interior Designer: Margulies Perruzzi
- Construction Manager: Cranshaw Construction

- MEP engineering: AHA Engineers
- Structural engineering: Odeh Engineers
- Acoustical Consulting: Acentech
- Landscape architecture: CRJA/IBI Group
- Landlord: National Development
- Broker: McCall & Almy

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New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540