
Payment System are also spurring the move away from having ancillary facilities in the hospital. Construction costs are reduced by having a separate ancillary service facility because building code requirements are less restrictive for buildings which do not house patients.

2.3.2 Current Trends

Specialized facilities demand specialized architectural services.

The dynamic nature of the health care industry and the increasingly complex and specialized procedures and technologies of health care delivery demands that the architects have more than a general knowledge of how the industry operates. For those architectural firms which invest time in developing this knowledge, the pay-off can be worthwhile. A recent survey by the American Institute of Architects showed that firms specializing in health care made more profit in their health care projects than in other building types.

Competition among architects is increasing - but the challenge and benefits can be worth the effort.

The survey also found that the competition for the design and planning of health care facilities is increasing. A major advantage of developing a niche in this field is that once a firm has its foot in the door, it is likely to be retained for frequent remodelling, retrofit and expansion assignments. One report estimates that 90 percent of recent construction work in hospitals is for these types of activity.

In this context it would seem desirable for architects to establish a working relationship with one of the private sector health maintenance organizations (HMO) such as National Medical Enterprises Inc. (NME) and American Medical International Inc. (AMI). HMOs, which provide contracting, financing and administrative support systems to hospitals and other health care facilities throughout the country, are being used increasingly by the health care industry to help it cope with the Prospective Payment system. The emergence of the HMOs is already leading to acceleration of design. To exert control over some basic design standards and to reduce design and construction time, both NME and AMI do some preliminary, in-house design work before commissioning an architectural firm to