

Environmental Standards Council Series: The Case for Access to Nature in the 2014 *Guidelines for Design and Construction of Health Care Facilities*

In their recommendations for the 2014 *Guidelines for Design & Construction of Healthcare Facilities*, The Center for Health Design's Environmental Standards Council (ESC) proposed language and substantiating evidence for incorporating Access to Nature as one of the Key Elements in the Physical Environment Component of the Environment of Care. Providing access to nature in healthcare facilities has evolved from being viewed as an “icing on the cake” amenity to acceptance as an essential design component for patient, visitor, and staff health and well-being. While both quantitative and qualitative research supports this, it has yet to be considered an inextricable aspect of the design process by most regulatory agencies.

In 2006, the ESC co-authored the "Environment of Care" chapter of the *Guidelines*, unanimously accepted by the Guidelines Review Committee, which outlined environmental factors that contribute to patient, staff, and family satisfaction as well as increased safety, fewer medical errors, and a healthier financial bottom line. This presentation, the first of the Environmental Standards Council Series from The Center for Health Design, will look at ongoing work that proposes revisions to the *Guidelines* that will allow regulatory agencies to more strongly support the inclusion of meaningful outdoor spaces in future projects.

Learning Objectives:

1. Learn about the role of the FGI Guidelines in project design and development – what they are; who uses them; and why they are an important as a reference in project reviews.
2. Learn about the proposed change to the 2014 Guidelines – how your work will be affected and where to find the research/evidence to support “Access to Nature” in your next project.
3. Obtain an understanding of the “Environment of Care” concept – Its basis, components, and use in overall project design.
4. Identify the Advocacy role of the Environmental Standards Council, how it supports the work of the Center for Health Design, and how you can participate.