

# Optimal Healing Environments

---

To support ongoing innovation in the area of optimal healing environments, the Samuelli Institute launched the Optimal Healing Environments (OHE) Program in the spring of 2005 to determine how theory about healing translates into real world practice. The Samuelli Institute developed the Optimal Healing Environment as a unifying concept and research framework to begin describing what OHE actually looks like when it is implemented in different health care settings. An Optimal Healing Environment supports and stimulates patient healing by combining one or more of the following approaches.

## Optimal Healing Environments: *A Catalyst for Change*

[View our program brochure \(.pdf\)](#)<sup>1</sup>

While there are many innovative programs working to transform health care organizations in the United States into environments that promote healing, efforts to date consist mainly of isolated initiatives that are not evaluated in ways that have built a knowledge base in the area. The OHE Program is building that knowledge base. The OHE Program is one of the Samuelli Institute's primary research programs and is a catalyst for speeding the flow of information on healing environments from research to health care practice. The OHE Program has two key goals:

1. Develop and validate a business case for OHE to facilitate widespread adoption by innovative health care leaders and their organizations
2. Establish national standards for creating optimal healing environments

What will it take to move the concept of "healing environments" from research to practice? As more and more hospitals implement "healing initiatives," how are they defining and measuring success? Can this body of knowledge about healing have a transformative effect on our health care system in the absence of a promising business case? These are all questions the Samuelli Institute is exploring through its OHE Program.

The Samuelli Institute's aim is to articulate a complete framework of actionable practices and evaluation methods that, if implemented, would lead to more cost-effective, efficient organizations in which the environment truly facilitates healing and where care providers are fully supported to reconnect to the mission at their professional roots – the mission of caring.

[View the OHE Framework](#)<sup>2</sup>

## Reports

### Innovative 21st Century Building Environments for VA Healthcare Delivery

Transformation to 21st Century care delivery presents the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with critical challenges similar to those confronting private sector healthcare facility owners and operators. Healthcare facilities must meet new requirements to optimize care, increase productivity, enhance sustainability, and improve disaster resistance, while reducing energy consumption and operating and maintenance expenses. The National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) coordinated the VA

- 
1. daisy:277-SIIB (Optimal Healing Environments)
  2. daisy:393-SIIB (OHE Framework)

exploration for a new paradigm that would transform VA care for the 21st Century by creating a new generation of high-performance, sustainable healthcare environments for the changing population of veterans. NIBS convened a multi-disciplinary Task Group to investigate and document the state of practice and art for high performance, sustainable, and flexible environments for healing. Samueli Institute participated in this Task Force and contributed to this report. To download, click the links below.

[Report: Executive Summary](#)<sup>3</sup>

[Report: Part 1](#)<sup>4</sup>

[Report: Part 2](#)<sup>5</sup>

## Survey of Healing Environments in Hospitals: Final Report

One of the Samueli Institute's main goals is to understand what components of a hospital environment contribute to optimal patient recovery and well-being. Another is to evaluate the business impact of optimal healing environments.

To better understand the nature and prevalence of initiatives thought to contribute to healing environments in hospitals, the OHE<sup>SM</sup> Program will conduct a nationwide survey of thousands of hospitals across the United States. To test our survey approach for feasibility and content, we created the *Survey of Healing Environments in Hospitals* and piloted it with 125 Volunteer Hospital Association (VHA) hospitals in the upper Midwest region of the United States. We received responses from 55 hospitals, a response rate of 44%.

The 20-page pilot survey collected both qualitative and quantitative data from nurses and patient-care executives about healing environment initiatives in their hospitals. It was organized according to the framework we have developed to think and communicate about optimal healing environments, encompassing the following components:

- Collaborative Healthcare
- Practicing Healthy Lifestyles
- Healing Spaces
- Creating Healing Organizations
- Cultivating Healing Relationships
- Developing Healing Intention
- Experiencing Personal Wholeness

[View Complete Report](#)<sup>6</sup>

[View Survey Instrument](#)<sup>7</sup>

## Recent Publications

Christianson JB, Finch MD, Findlay B, Jonas, WB, Choate CG. *Reinventing the Patient Experience: Strategies for Hospital Leaders*. ACE Management Series, HAP 2007. [Click here to order](#)<sup>8</sup>.

- 
3. daisy:942-SIIB (VA 21st Century ExSum)
  4. daisy:943-SIIB (VA 21st Century Part 1)
  5. daisy:944-SIIB (VA 21st Century Part 2)
  6. daisy:421-SIIB (Reportwithinstrument9-18)
  7. daisy:419-SIIB (final survey instrument)

[Recently published journal articles and book chapters](#)<sup>9</sup>

[2nd American Samueli Symposium Towards Optimal Healing Environments in Health Care](#)<sup>10</sup>

[3rd American Samueli Symposium Developing Healing Relationships](#)<sup>11</sup>

## Working with Us

The Samueli Institute collaborates with innovative health care leaders and organizations from across the country to explore the science of healing—in this case, optimal healing environments. The OHE Program works with organizations that:

- Are committed to transforming health care
- Have experience designing and implementing healing initiatives
- Have relevant, unanalyzed data on their healing initiatives
- Want to evaluate their programs
- Establish benchmarks for quality health care
- Serve as a network for health care decision makers
- Are interested in transferring knowledge into practice
- Can imagine themselves as a ‘living laboratory’ for health care research

To date, some of the OHE Program collaborators include:

- Allina Hospitals & Clinics, Minnesota
- Atlantic Health System, New Jersey
- The BirchTree Center, Massachusetts
- Florida Hospital Celebration Health, Florida
- Group Health of Puget Sound, Washington
- Health Forum/American Hospital Association, Washington, DC
- Highline Medical Center, Washington
- North Hawaii Community Hospital, Hawaii
- St. Charles Medical Center, Oregon
- St. Rose Dominican Hospitals, Catholic Healthcare West, Nevada
- Valley Hospital, New Jersey
- Veterans Health Administration, Washington, DC
- Volunteer Hospitals Association, Inc., Texas
- Windber Medical Center, Pennsylvania

## Contact the OHE Knowledge Center

Sita Ananth, MHA

---

8. <http://www.ache.org/pubs/redesign/productcatalog.cfm?pc=WWW1-2092>

9. [daisy:213-SIIB#ohepubs](#) (Journal Articles/Book Chapters)

10. [daisy:162-SIIB](#) (Proceeding Jan04 Overview)

11. [daisy:229-SIIB](#) (Proceeding Apr05 Overview)

Director  
1737 King Street, Suite 600  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703.299.4830 (office)  
[sananth@SamueliInstitute.org](mailto:sananth@SamueliInstitute.org)<sup>12</sup>

## Fields

Name	Value
BannerImage	Optimal Healing Banner Image

---

12. <mailto:sananth@SamueliInstitute.org>