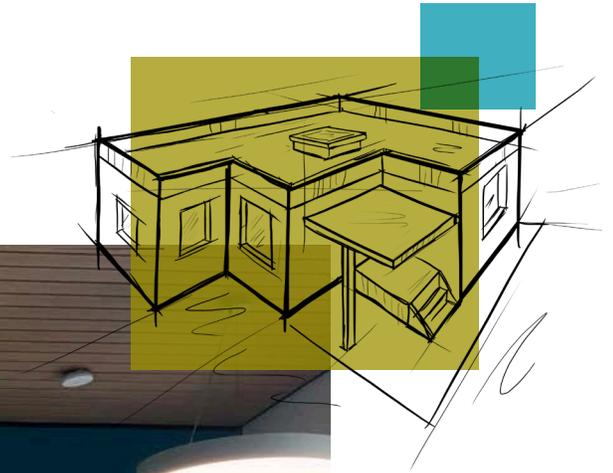


Creating a culture where patients feel at home

Premier Gastroenterology Associates (PGA),
Premier Medical Plaza, Little Rock, Arkansas



Premier Gastroenterology Associates (PGA), a physician-owned healthcare practice, repurposed a long-vacant big box retail space into the new Premier Medical Plaza, a patient-centered facility serving Little Rock, Arkansas.

Products in use

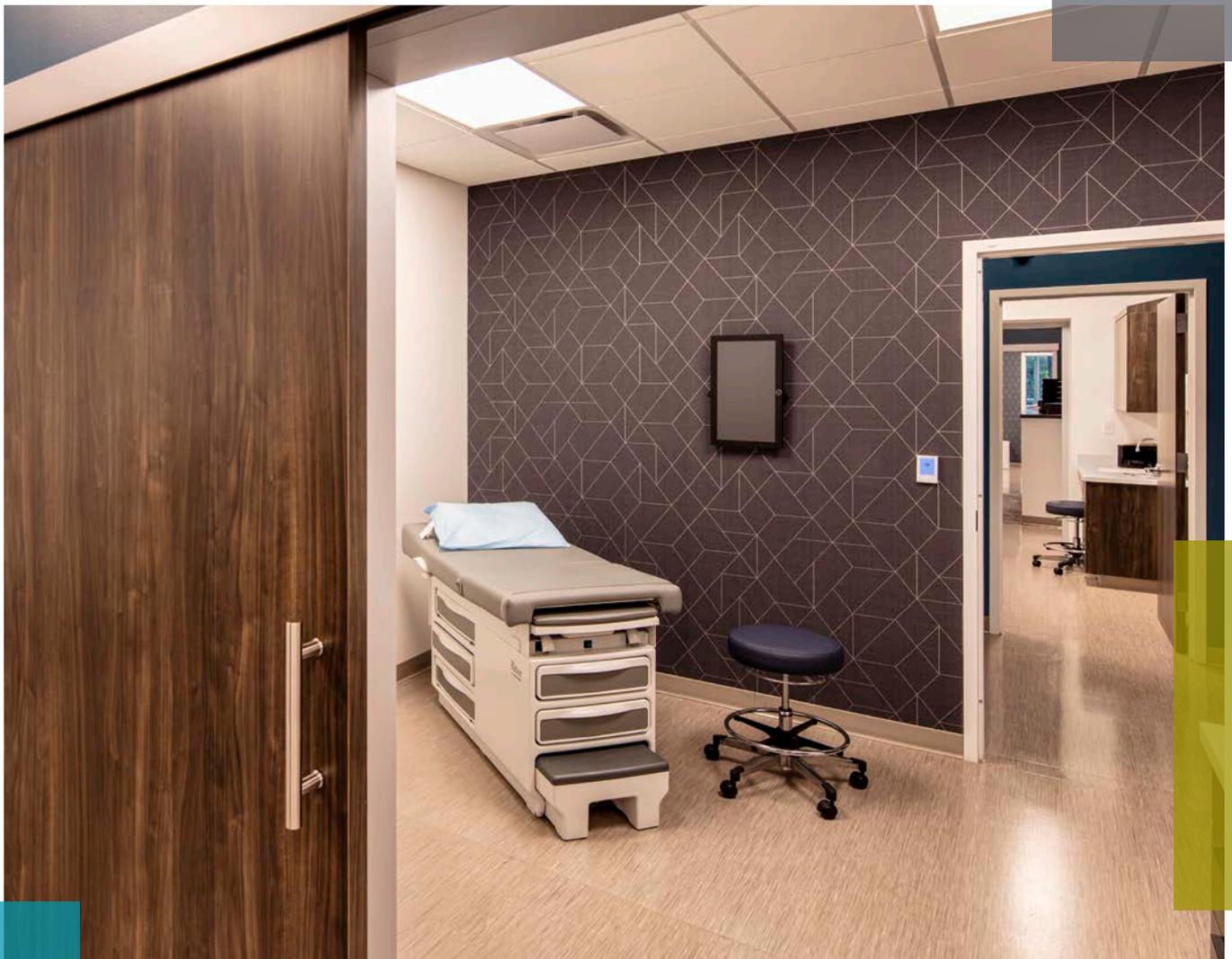
- Rockfon Artic®
- Rockfon® Medical™ Plus
- Rockfon® Planar® Macroplus®
- Chicago Metallic® 1200

Helping bring PGA's ambitious vision to reality, WER Architects/Planners worked closely with its client to create a welcoming, comfortable experience for the wellbeing of both patients and staff. Along with a generous use of natural light and a palette of calming colors, WER carefully selected materials to support safety, health, cleanliness and acoustic privacy.

All of Rockfon's ceiling systems were supplied through J.E. Allen Co. and installed by Clark Contractors. The completed Premier Medical

Plaza offers medical, clinical and surgery facilities for several medical groups in 100,000 square feet of space.

Where there previously was an empty building, PGA now had its healthcare professionals and state-of-the-art facility ready to respond to the community.



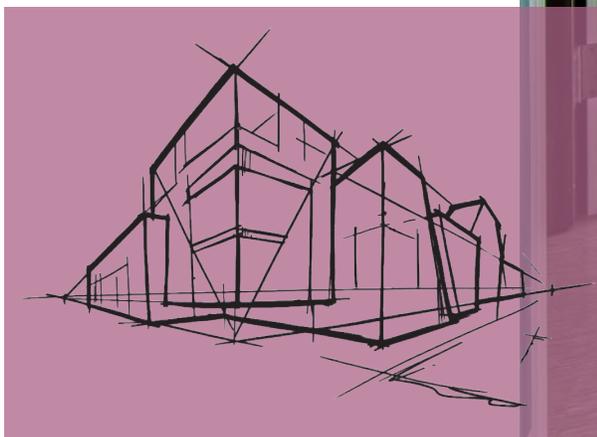
Patient-Centered, Personalized Care

PGA's mission is to provide the highest quality digestive disease care, imparted in a warm, personal, and genuine manner, to all patients who need help.

"We wanted to create a whole new culture in healthcare. A culture where our patients and our employees feel like they're our family, and feel like they're coming home when they come to Premier Gastroenterology," said Premier's CEO William E. Greene III, ACHE.

At Premier, Greene explained, the patient is not just a name on a chart. Medical expertise should go hand-in-hand with compassionate care. A trip to the doctor's office can be an unnerving experience for many people. Premier Gastroenterology's doctors are all known for their kindness, empathy and attentiveness – attributes that go a long way in putting their patients at ease and making the experience at Premier a great one.

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Safety and Health

“First, do no harm,” is an often-quoted mantra in medicine. It also rings true for the design and construction teams responsible for building the essential medical and healthcare facilities in our communities. Safety and health are the top priorities in evaluating materials and finishes for these spaces. This includes not only their composition, but also their cleanliness.

“There were a lot of unique challenges to this project; it being such an old building,” said WER’s associate and project architect, James Swann, AIA. “Prior to the new medical design, it was a big box store. Taking something that was obviously meant to be a retail store and turning it into something that’s medical, that’s clean and efficient, and that has all of these requirements is very complicated.”

WER’s director of interiors, Lauren Dickey, NCIDQ, ASID, agreed and added, “In today’s medical facilities, infection control is incredibly important – cleanability is huge.”

Where infection control is the priority, Rockfon’s specially treated medical and hygienic ceiling panel surface finishes allow cleaning with water and some diluted disinfectants. In some cases, specially treated surface finishes on stone wool ceiling panels allow for more intensive cleaning, following a defined protocol.

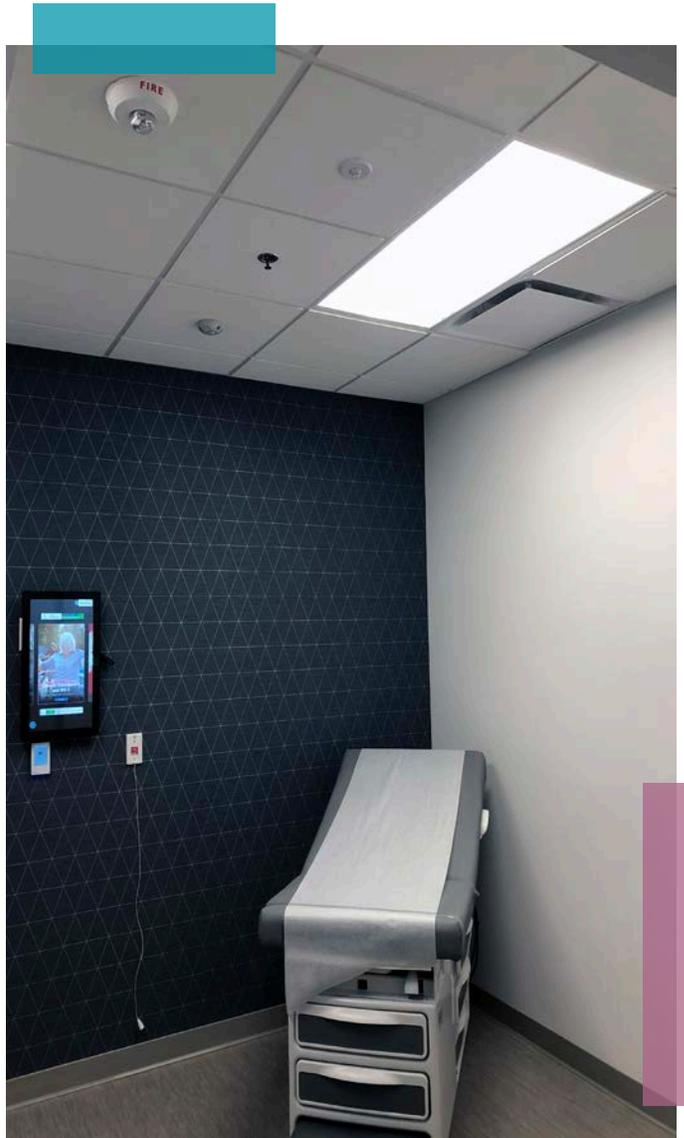
Meeting Premier Medical Plaza’s most critical cleaning requirements, Rockfon Medical Standard ceiling panels are classified to Bacteriological Class B5 and B10. They have a low particle emission resulting in Clean Room Classification ISO Class 5.

Along with being easy to clean, Rockfon’s metal and stone wool ceiling systems do not absorb water, moisture or humidity, and they do not contain organic materials. The inherent qualities of these ceiling panels also resist mold, mildew and other potentially harmful microorganisms.

“Knowing that those do not mold or mildew, knowing that you can wipe them down easily, that they’re not going to sag, and that they’re not going to fall out of the ceiling – really gave us confidence in moving forward with the products that we selected,” said Dickey.

The stone wool panels installed throughout PGA’s facility also have earned UL® Environment’s GREENGUARD® Gold Certification for low chemical emissions into indoor air during product usage. The certification process ensures that a product is suitable for environments, such as healthcare facilities, and takes into consideration safety factors that may impact those with vulnerable immune systems, children and seniors.

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Optimized Acoustics

Just as the air we breathe surrounds and affects us, so too do the sounds we hear. "Sound control is a critical issue, particularly in a high-volume clinic like ours," said Greene.

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Loud and overlapping sounds, even at a conversational level, can quickly become unwanted noise. Noise can cause distraction, confusion and agitation. It can mean that a healthcare professional loses focus and inaccurately records critical information. It can mean that a nurse becomes desensitized to auditory monitoring cues and is slow to react to a patient in need. It can mean that a patient with compromised hearing does not understand a doctor's instructions. It can mean that private conversation between a family and a medical professional is overheard, violating HIPPA.

To help protect privacy, increase comprehension and improve concentration for PGA's team, WER designed Premier Medical Plaza with Optimized Acoustics™ in mind. Rockfon's Optimized Acoustics' simple, three-step approach is based on proven acoustical engineering practices:

1. Select a ceiling system to optimize acoustic absorption.
2. Where needed, use full-height walls or plenum barriers and floor slabs to effectively optimize sound insulation or blocking between rooms.
3. Ensure that the background sound level is within the desired range.

This approach achieves the best sound experience at the best price. It also complies with the more stringent acoustic requirements of current building standards and guidelines. For example, the guidelines for the design and construction of healthcare facilities, published by the Facilities Guidelines Institute (FGI), require that "all normally occupied healthcare facility spaces shall incorporate acoustic surfaces."

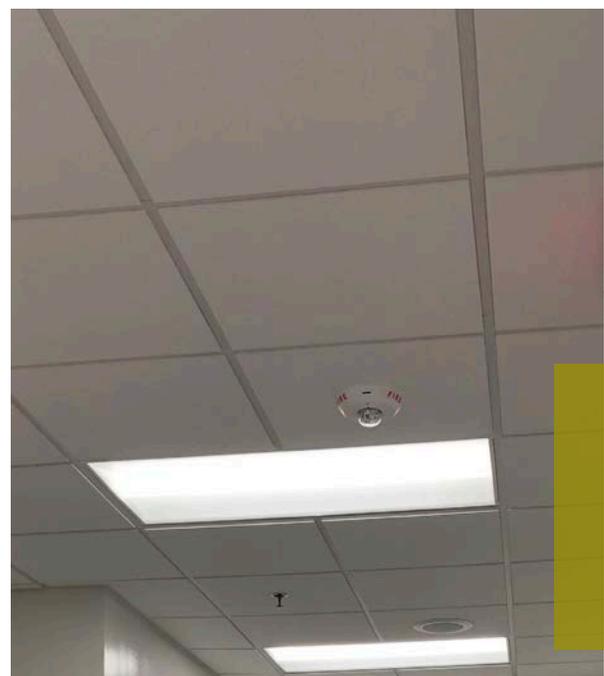
To meet their higher performance criteria, many building standards, guidelines and evidence-based design principles now require the use of a high Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) ceiling panel. An NRC of 0.90 or more is considered the best category of sound absorption, and is recommended for patient care areas. For Premier Medical Plaza's patient care rooms, Rockfon Medical Standard stone wool ceiling products provide an NRC of 0.90.

In the breakrooms where the function of the room is not sound sensitive and in private offices where one person usually occupies the room, Rockfon Artic acoustic stone wool panels provide an economical product with a good NRC of 0.75.

Rockfon's metal ceiling panels also can provide an NRC as high as 0.90. Rockfon Planar Macroplus linear metal ceilings were perforated and installed at Premier Medical Plaza with an Acoutex™ backer for improved acoustics above the nurses' stations and the staff's centralized workstations to support their focused productivity. In the main waiting areas, the acoustic backer was not used, as these communal spaces do not require the same level of privacy and concentration.

As part of an Optimized Acoustics approach to the ceiling design, Dickey added that "Being able to take products that look good and also have a great acoustical value really helps bring both of those together in a very successful design."

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Welcoming Atmosphere

Bright, daylit interiors also contribute to creating Premier's comfortable, inviting space for both patients and staff. Skylights are positioned above the centralized workstations and nurses' stations and in the corridors. Helping maximize the natural light, Rockfon Artic and Medical Standard ceiling panels' white surface reflects 85% of light to illuminate the interior spaces.

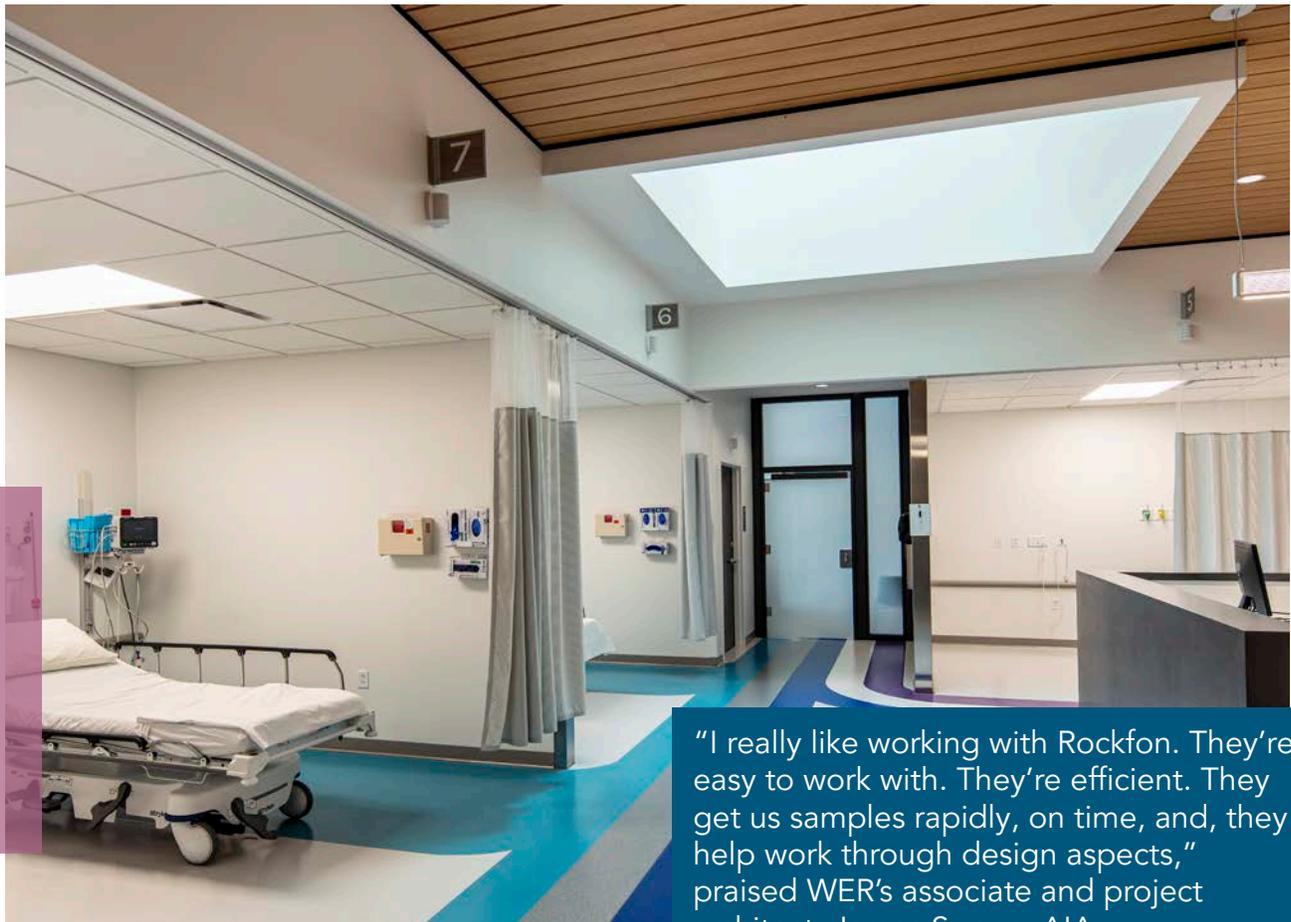
In the patient waiting areas, natural light enters through the floor-to-ceiling glass along the exterior walls. Enhancing this warm, calming atmosphere, WER considered adding natural wood interior finishes, but realized the limitations of natural lumber. "We were looking for something to help ground this space," said Dickey.

Swann elaborated, "Trying to bring that warmth and comfort into the interior waiting spaces where you're going to have patients, and being able to do that in a medical space is hard. With Rockfon, we were able to put in a metal panel that looks like wood and allows you that durability, sustainability and fire-proof quality that you don't get with wood."

Presenting the desired biophilic appearance without the maintenance and performance issues of actual wood, WER specified Metalwood Maple Woodgrain Finish on Rockfon Planar Macroplus 6-inch linear metal ceilings.

"When it comes to being an architect or interior designer, trying to create something from your thought to putting it on a page to making it an actual space – it's complicated when you're using all these different types of materials that have limitations," acknowledged Swann.

"Rockfon has this modularity to it and this adaptability to allow you to create that scene that you're trying to develop. I really like working with Rockfon. They're easy to work with. They're efficient. They get us samples rapidly, on time, and, they help work through design aspects," praised Swann.



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For Premier Gastroenterology, he reviewed, "We have the Macroplus linear metal ceilings. We have the Artic tile, which is kind of our utilitarian tile that's in the hallway. And we have the Medical Standard that's in all the medical spaces."

Dickey summarized, "We were able to use three different products here. Each one served a specific purpose and really helped us get the design and aesthetics that we needed."



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