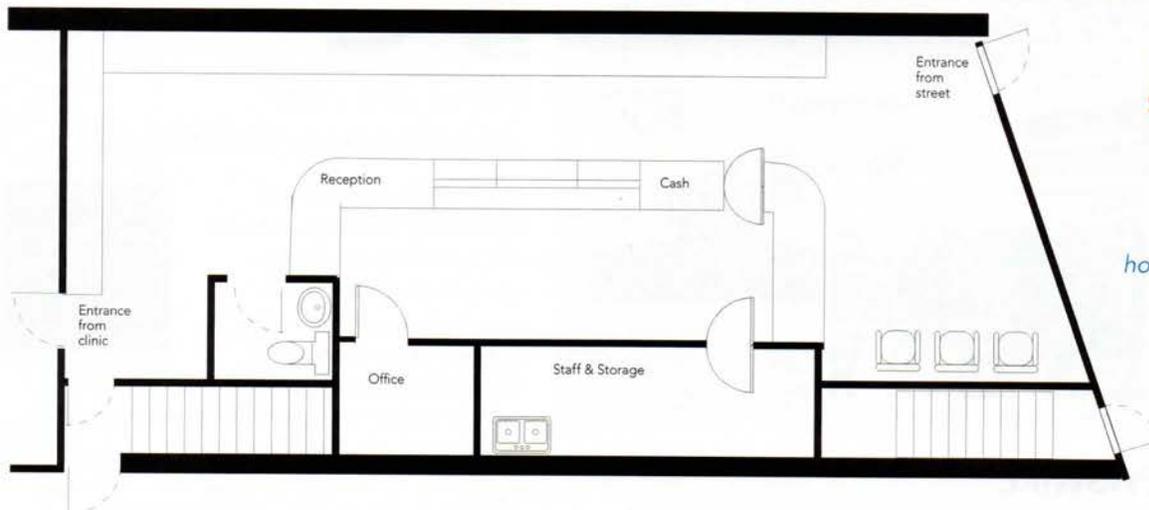




by Wayne Morgan Caverly

A CAUTIONARY TALE: DESIGN MUST BE BASED IN YOUR PHARMACY REALITY!

Our third Design Challenge submission comes from a Toronto-area pharmacist who would like to remain anonymous. He is currently working in a chain pharmacy but plans to open a new medical clinic dispensary. As often happens, the firm designing the building has offered to design his pharmacy as well. The only problem? **They don't know the business of pharmacy!**



HERE'S THE SUGGESTED LAYOUT



Let's see how many issues we can find.

- 1 There is only **one exit** from the dispensary into the front shop. This means any staff at the reception/office end of the dispensary must walk all the way to the opposite end (more than 18 feet) to exit to the front shop.
- 2 Not only is there no designated semi-private counselling area, there is **no private counselling room**—making this pharmacy illegal in Ontario (and in most other provinces).
- 3 Speaking of legalities, there is **no sink** in the dispensary. There is one shown in the storage area, but that won't cut it.
- 4 The main **dispensary counter is shown 15" deep**. Usually dispensing counters are 24"–30" deep.
- 5 The **pharmacy is backwards**. As we discussed in our previous article, the reception should be in a natural path from the entrance. In this case, we have 2 entrances at either end of the space: One from the medical clinic and another from the street. The usual way of handling this design dilemma is to find out what percentage of clients will be approaching from each entrance. In this case, the owner has indicated the majority of patients will enter from the street; therefore, the reception needs to be relocated closer to the street entrance.
- 6 The **service counters** (Rx in and Rx out/cash) are both **too wide**, allowing too many clients to approach the counter at the same time.
- 7 The problems are not only in the dispensary: The **frontshop shelving is shown 27" deep!** In a standard retail pharmacy the front shop would use 14" or 16" base shelves (with

smaller shelves above). In medical clinic pharmacies, with their emphasis on prescription filling, frontshop shelving should not be more than 12-14" base shelves. This also applies to the shelving in front of the Rx counter, shown as 14" base shelves. These should be narrower, which will also allow the needed increase in the depth of the main dispensing counter.

Indeed, there are too many concerns with this design to cover this month. We will come back to this design in future columns, and address the issues in more detail. The lesson this month is a cautionary tale about the risks of trusting someone who doesn't know your profession and business to plan your physical layout.

In fact, we submitted this analysis to the prospective new owner and he has decided to use a pharmacy designer to help with his new store. That is an excellent idea that we recommend to anyone opening a new pharmacy. Canada has some outstanding pharmacy design specialists.

As always, we encourage you to submit your designs and questions for analysis in future issues. □

Submit your drawings, layouts or photos to vicki.wood@rci.rogers.com

Wayne Morgan Caverly is president of Caverly Consulting Group and its divisions: Solutions by Design, Efficient Pharmacy Solutions, The Efficient Pharmacy Institute and Caverly Management Consulting.

For references, product websites, or additional information, please contact wayne@caverly.ca.