THE BERYL INSTITUTE

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Finding the Way: Creating Confidence in Healthcare Navigation
New White Paper Released by The Beryl Institute Reframes Healthcare Wayfinding as an Expression of Care

Global research highlights how integrated navigation systems can reduce uncertainty and build confidence across the healthcare experience.

NASHVILLE, TN (October 1, 2026) — The Beryl Institute has released a new white paper examining how healthcare organizations can move beyond signs, maps, and directions to create more coordinated, accessible, and confidence-building navigation experiences. *Finding the Way: Creating Confidence in Healthcare Navigation* explores the complete healthcare journey from preparing at home and traveling to a facility to finding parking, moving between services, and navigating the return home.

Drawing on insights from patients, family members, subject matter experts, and healthcare organizations around the world, the paper positions wayfinding as both an operational responsibility and an essential part of the human experience of healthcare. The research identifies a central finding: Effective wayfinding is not simply about whether someone reaches a destination. It is about whether that person feels informed, capable, and supported throughout the journey.

The paper highlights five interconnected elements of an effective wayfinding system:

- **The physical environment**, including architecture, entrances, pathways, landmarks, lighting, and signs
- **Clear and consistent terminology** across appointment communications, websites, applications, maps, signs, and employee directions
- **Visible human support** from employees, volunteers, security personnel, and others prepared to recognize and assist people who may be lost
- **Appropriate technology** that supports preparation, navigation, communication, and access without replacing human connection
- **Cross-functional governance** that establishes shared ownership, coordinated decision-making, and ongoing maintenance

The findings also demonstrate that the navigation journey begins well before someone enters a healthcare facility. Online searches, appointment instructions, GPS addresses, transportation planning, and parking information can either build confidence or introduce confusion before care begins.

Stress, illness, pain, fatigue, mobility limitations, sensory or cognitive differences, and language barriers can further affect a person's ability to process information and find the way. The paper encourages organizations to provide multiple forms of support and to involve patients and family members in the design and testing of navigation systems.

Examples from healthcare organizations and communities in the United States, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Lebanon, and Singapore illustrate how organizations are using patient navigation services, volunteer zones, visible assistance programs, digital platforms, culturally responsive resources, and employee service behaviors to support people across the journey.

Among its recommendations, the paper encourages healthcare leaders to:

- Treat wayfinding as a human experience priority
- Map the journey from home to the point of care and back again
- Align terminology across physical, digital, and human touchpoints
- Design for people navigating under stress
- Engage patients and families before solutions are finalized
- Integrate environmental, human, and technological support
- Equip employees and volunteers to provide proactive assistance and
- Establish systems for maintaining and measuring the navigation experience

The paper concludes that arrival alone is not an adequate measure of success. Organizations should also consider confidence, clarity, stress, perceived effort, access to assistance, information accuracy, and system reliability.

"Wayfinding is far more than helping someone get from one place to another. It is about reducing uncertainty, building confidence, and showing people that they will be supported throughout their healthcare journey," said Jason Wolf, President and CEO of The Beryl Institute. "When we approach navigation as an integrated part of the human experience, every interaction and touchpoint becomes an opportunity to communicate care."

Finding the Way: Creating Confidence in Healthcare Navigation is available at https://theberylinstitute.org/wayfinding-white-paper-media-access/

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About The Beryl Institute:
The Beryl Institute is a global community of healthcare professionals and experience champions committed to transforming the human experience in healthcare. As a pioneer and leader of the experience movement and patient experience profession for more than a decade, the Institute offers unparalleled access to unbiased research and proven practices, networking and professional development opportunities and a safe, neutral space to exchange ideas and learn from others.

We define the patient experience as *the sum of all interactions, shaped by an organization's culture, that influence patient perceptions across the continuum of care*. We believe human experience is grounded in the experiences of patients & families, members of the healthcare workforce and the communities they serve. You can follow The Beryl Institute on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter (@BerylInstitute). Visit The Beryl Institute website at www.theberylinstitute.org.