

# Cleveland Clinic, Lutheran Hospital Wayfinding Cleveland, Ohio

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Lutheran Hospital is an acute care facility with more than 200 beds serving the vibrant Ohio City neighborhood of Cleveland and beyond. Its specialties include orthopedics and spine, behavioral health and chronic wound care; and the hospital prides itself on delivering sophisticated technology and premier Cleveland Clinic care to patients. Over the years, Lutheran Hospital has expanded. The renovation of its Emergency Room provided an opportunity to re-evaluate the efficiency of signage and the overall wayfinding strategy.

## Objective

To improve the navigability of the hospital and design a simplified sign system to align with other Cleveland Clinic facilities.



***“The goal is, anyone walking into any Cleveland Clinic facility should recognize the building immediately as Cleveland Clinic through the signage and general layout of the area. We try to maintain brand consistency everywhere.”***

Tom Federico, Lutheran Hospital

## CASE STUDY

### Cleveland Clinic, Lutheran Hospital Wayfinding

#### Objective

Cleveland Clinic has an existing sign family, including a font and layout standard that was developed and implemented by its in-house signage department and organized into a sign standards manual (created by Guide).

“The goal is, anyone walking into any Cleveland Clinic facility should recognize the building immediately as Cleveland Clinic through the signage and general layout of the area,” Federico says. “We try to maintain brand consistency everywhere.”

Despite all these efforts, Lutheran Hospital’s wayfinding experience and signage did not seamlessly align with other Cleveland Clinic facilities.

“The signage at Lutheran Hospital was inconsistent, and because the hospital had been added on to many times over the years, it was not clear how to get from one place to another,” says Tom Federico, signage department manager for Cleveland Clinic. “There were too many signs, and the result was visual clutter where people were not really sure what sign they should be looking at to find their way.” To remedy the issues, we recommended 3 steps, *listed to the right*.

#### Challenge

Excessive signage complicated wayfinding for visitors. Previously, signage issues were “solved” by adding more signs. Because Spanish language signs are necessary to serve the population at Lutheran Hospital, that nearly doubled the amount of signage since there was no sign standard in place to combine English/Spanish, Federico explains.

While signage was the hook for Cleveland Clinic’s Planning and Design department to revamp its system, the root of the problem (people getting lost) prompted a more layered wayfinding program.

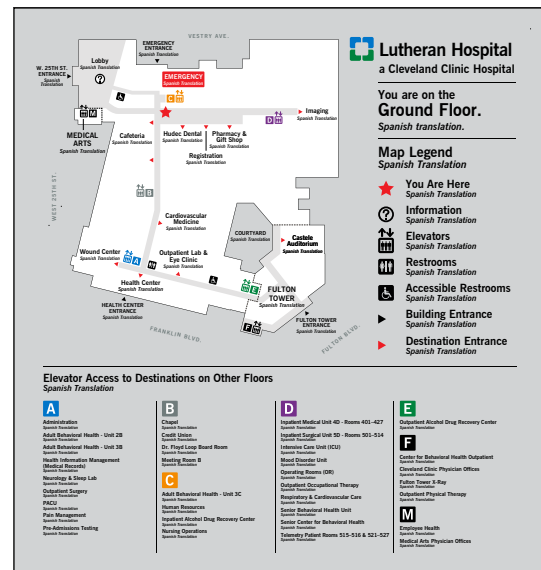
Wayfinding is the strategy for navigation, taking into account how each audience travels through the facility to find a destination. Through a nomenclature audit and analysis of the existing program, Guide Studio uncovered multiple inconsistencies in naming, which prompted confusion and resulted in hospital staff having to redirect people. Also, there were too many signs directing people everywhere from one location, as opposed to a general-to-specific hierarchy that feeds visitors information as they need it.

“Guide Studio was very responsive to our needs and they have a great history of working with institutions like ours,” Federico says.

“They understand our branding and need for consistency.”

#### We recommended the following:

1. Develop a layered wayfinding strategy including standard nomenclature.
2. Implement a color-coded elevator-to-destination system.
3. Incorporate heads-up mapping throughout the hospital.



New Map and Elevator Directory Design

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## CASE STUDY

### Cleveland Clinic, Lutheran Hospital Wayfinding

#### Solutions

Guide Studio developed a hierarchal wayfinding strategy for Lutheran Hospital and leveraged the existing sign standards manual to ensure consistency and alignment with other facilities in the Cleveland Clinic system.

**Creating Standard Nomenclature:** To learn exactly how visitors were traveling throughout Lutheran Hospital, Guide Studio conducted a detailed audit of nomenclature used throughout the building. This nomenclature exercise educated staff about how naming conventions impact people's ability to find their way. Nomenclature goes beyond signage and digs into the deeper issue: assigning multiple names to a single destination. For example, a directional sign might read Radiology while the door sign says Imaging, and hospital staff calls it X-Ray.

Together with hospital administrators, Guide Studio identified appropriate nomenclature for each area and department at the hospital. Some nomenclature was required by hospital protocol; other names existed because of emotional attachment. Guide Studio's charge was to mediate an open conversation with administration based on audit findings so the team could come to consensus on a standard nomenclature.

**Analyzing Traffic Flow:** From there, the team analyzed the traffic flow from different audience perspectives. By mapping out user scenarios, Guide Studio determined where major decision points occurred, and which areas were confusing and congested. Then, a wayfinding plan was developed based on a hierarchy to help minimize clutter and provide clear directions.

A key philosophy driving the wayfinding solution at Lutheran Hospital was to provide the most relevant information at the right time, as

opposed to directing people to everything from everywhere. That is where wayfinding hierarchy comes into play.

Another focus was providing clear, concise information in a way that people can digest it, while moving through the hospital. Too much signage can cancel out its functionality. "Lutheran Hospital can be a confusing place, as is the case with many older hospitals," Federico says. "It can be difficult for people to find their way around. That is where the wayfinding program Guide Studio created came into play."

**A Color-Coded Elevator System:** A layered wayfinding approach simplifies signage and delivers information to visitors at the appropriate time so they can easily travel through the hospital. With that in mind, Guide Studio developed a color-coded elevator system to visually differentiate elevators. From there, Guide Studio developed a new directory as an extension of the sign family that was also color coded to match departments and destinations with the right elevator to get people there. These were placed at main entrances and included consistent take-away maps to introduce the visitor to the color-coded wayfinding system, setting the expectation for their entire journey.

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Lutheran Design Guidelines Developed by Guide Studio

The color-coded system aligns with the philosophy that good wayfinding is invisible. Visitors are not necessarily thinking about

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New Signage:  
Derived from Clinic  
Standards

“Today, finding one’s way around Lutheran Hospital is much easier,” Federico reports. “Signage was reduced by approximately one-third, therefore eliminating the visual clutter that caused confusion previously.”

the colors directing them to their destination; however, the visual cue naturally choreographs a path and simply guides people to where they want to go.

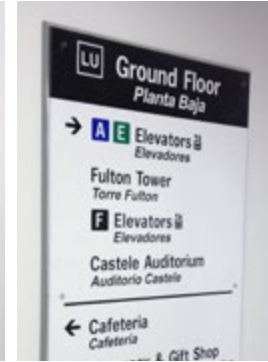
**Mapping:** To further simplify navigation, Guide Studio placed heads-up maps at key decision points and identified public destinations, corridors and color-coded elevators. Because of the facility’s low ceilings, there was not ample headroom for implementing hanging signs. Heads-up mapping gives people a “you are here” visual, reinforces the color-coding system and standard nomenclature, and provides an additional wayfinding tool for visitors to use when navigating the hospital.

#### What is heads-up mapping?

On a heads-up map, everything is oriented contextually to the person reading the map. Up is the direction you are facing, so what is to the right on the map is actually to your right, and what is to the left on the map is actually to your left.

**Simplified Signage:** Following the Cleveland Clinic sign standards manual, Guide Studio employed a “less is more” approach. For example, creating a bilingual sign format consolidated signage. “We worked hand-in-hand with Guide Studio throughout the process,” Federico says.

The name Fulton Tower was assigned to the patient tower, located on Fulton Road. This simplified nomenclature solution allows the signage program to direct people to Fulton Tower; and then signage at Fulton Tower guides visitors to their destination in more detail. Again, by applying nomenclature hierarchy and only giving



people information they need, the wayfinding experience is more concise and easier to navigate.

## Results

With 204 patient beds and around-the-clock traffic passing through the halls of Lutheran Hospital, a more informative and clear wayfinding strategy was necessary to avoid confusion and improve efficiency in the hospital.

Hospital staff has adopted the standard nomenclature and uses appropriate names when directing people. This ensures consistency and supports the new wayfinding program.

Beyond the improvements to Lutheran Hospital’s wayfinding, the sign standards manual that Guide Studio developed for the Cleveland Clinic continues to serve as a blueprint that aligns brand standards and best practices. These guidelines can be tailored to suit an individual hospitals’ needs. In fact, Cleveland Clinic engaged Guide Studio to implement an interior signage program at Medina Hospital, and exterior wayfinding and signage at its expanding Weston, Fla., hospital.

“What used to be straightforward wayfinding at the Weston, Florida campus has now been interrupted by more buildings, so it’s more difficult for people to find the right place to park and enter the building,” Federico says. “Using the principles applied at Lutheran Hospital, Guide Studio is assisting with a new wayfinding package there.”