United States Patent [19]

Greenspan

[11] **3,862,525**

[45] **Jan. 28, 1975**

[54] **MEDICAL OFFICE FACILITY WITH TWO OR MORE EXAMINING ROOMS HAVING A COMMON EQUIPMENT CORE AREA**

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[22] Filed: **June 28, 1973**

[21] Appl. No.: **374,372**

Related U.S. Application Data

[62] Division of Ser. No. 57,981, July 24, 1970, Pat. No. 3,742,932.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **52/64**, 52/234, 52/237

[51] **Int. Cl.** **E04h 3/08**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 52/64, 234, 237, 65; 128/2 R

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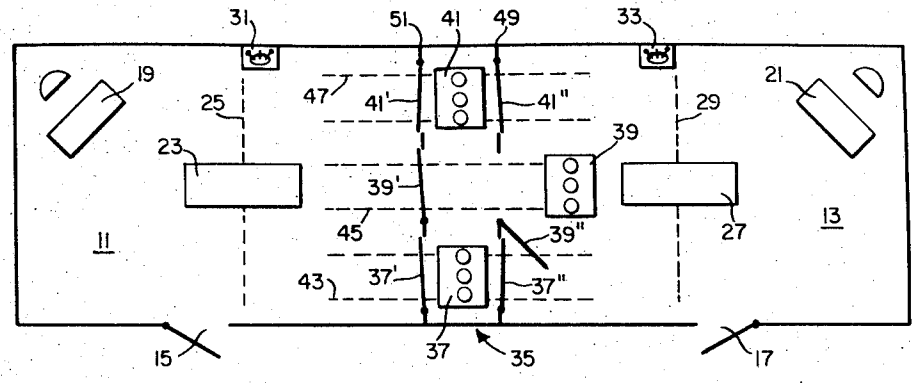
Primary Examiner—Price C. Faw, Jr.

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Woodcock, Washburn, Kurtz & Mackiewicz

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A building construction and method of use thereof wherein equipment for use in two or more rooms is contained in a core area common to the rooms and conveyed therein in a manner to maintain isolation between the rooms. In a preferred embodiment, a medical facility is provided for the examination of patients wherein at least two patient examining rooms have a common equipment core area adjacent to both examining rooms. Equipment pods containing medical equipment for given various medical specialities are contained in the core area and are accessible from each examining room, thereby increasing equipment utilization.

6 Claims, 16 Drawing Figures



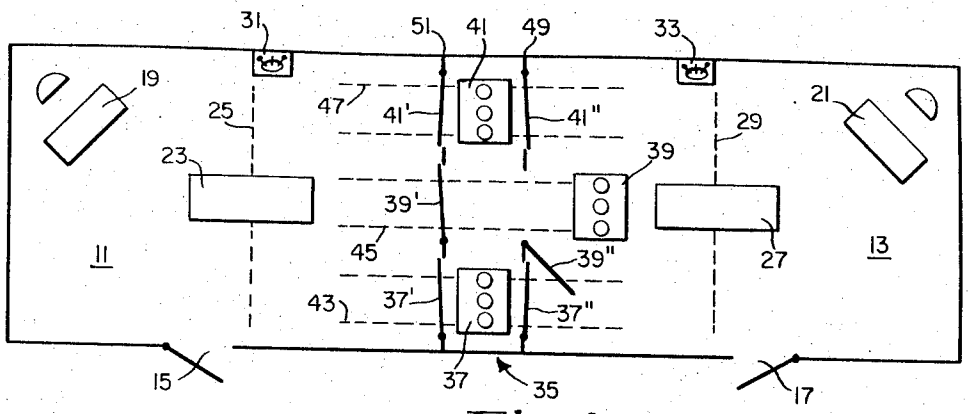


Fig. 1

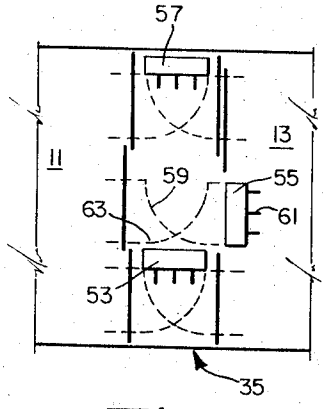


Fig. 2

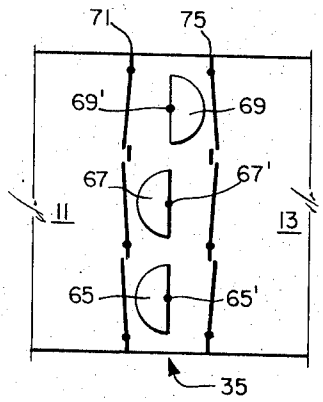


Fig. 3

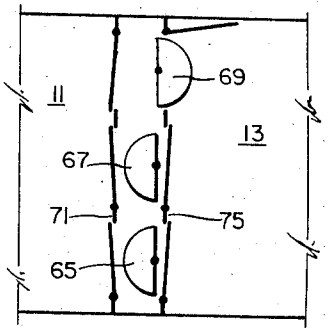


Fig. 4

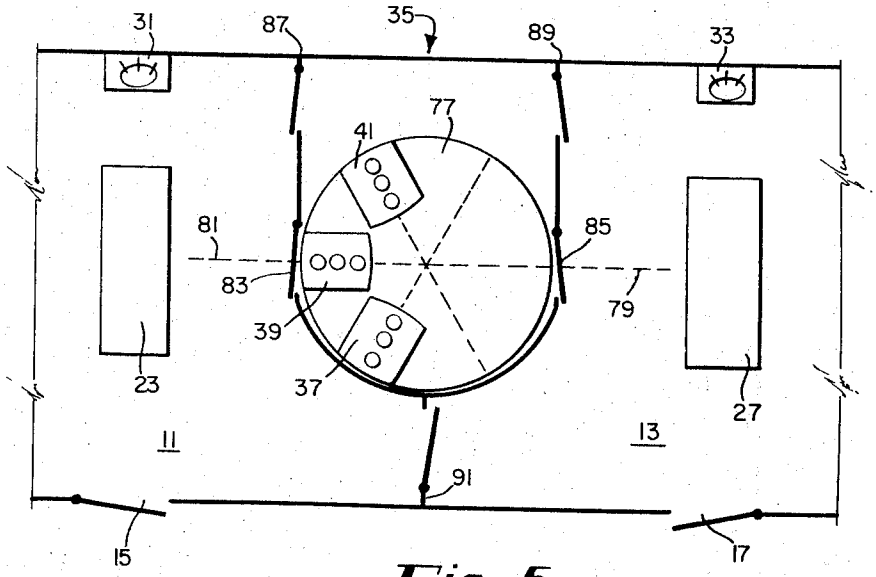


Fig. 5

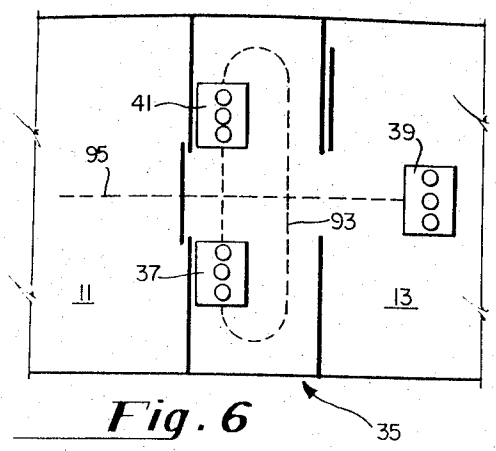


Fig. 6

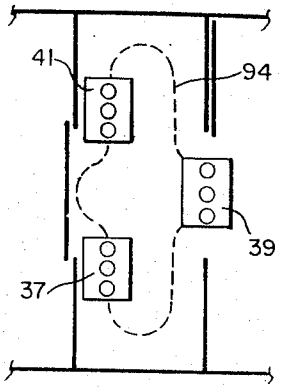


Fig. 6A

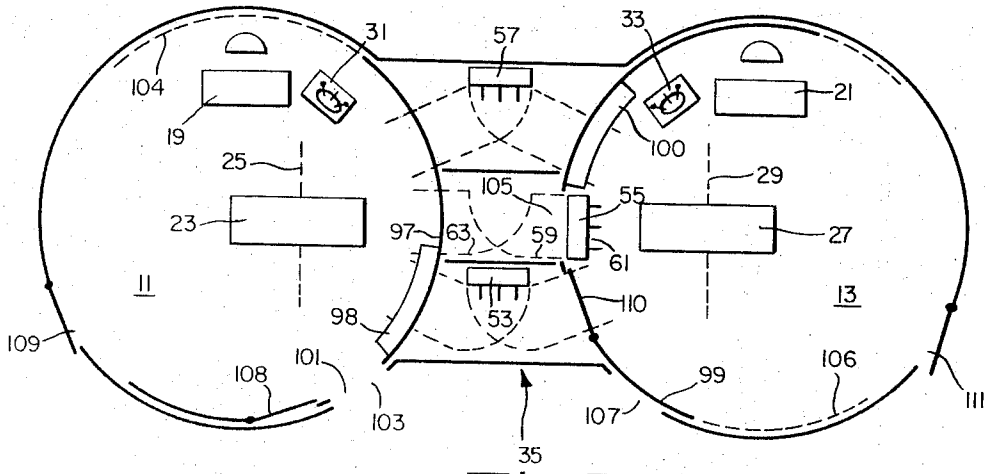


Fig. 7

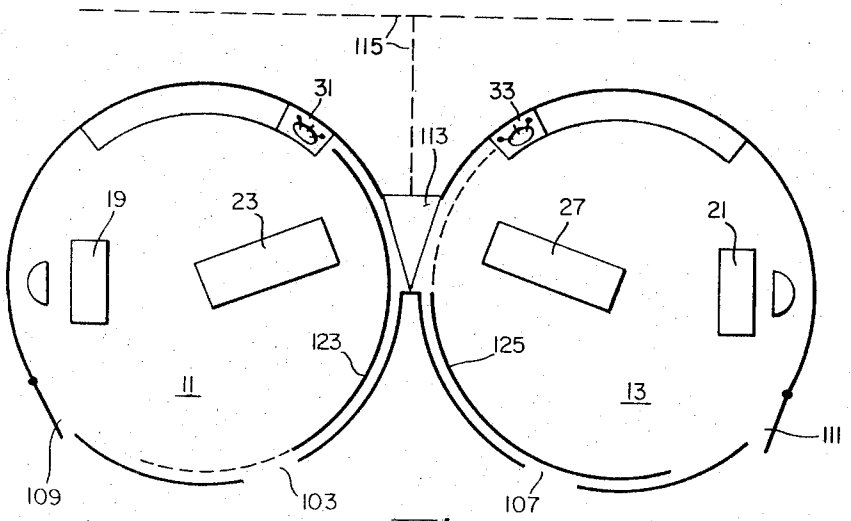


Fig. 8

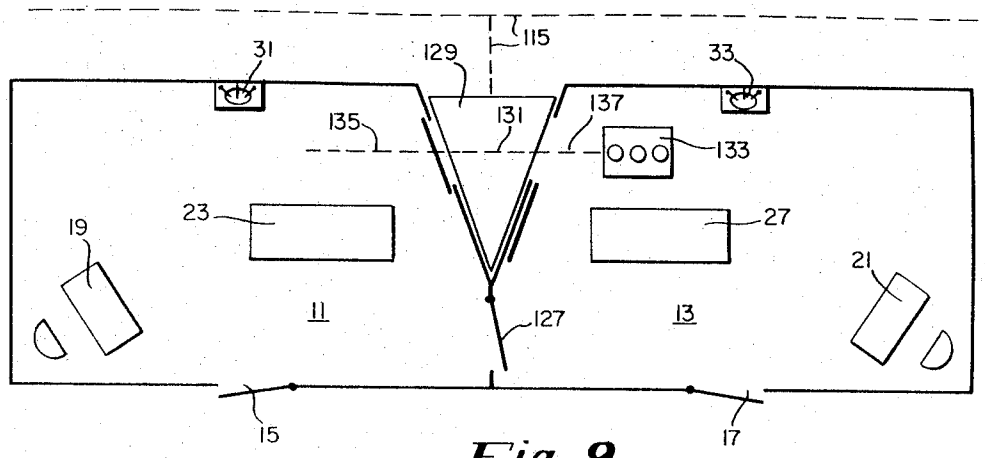


Fig. 9

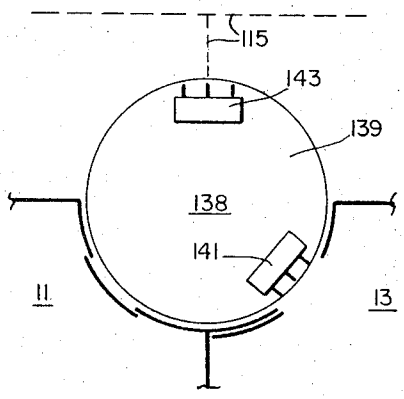


Fig. 10

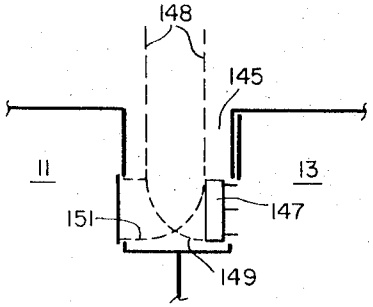


Fig. 11

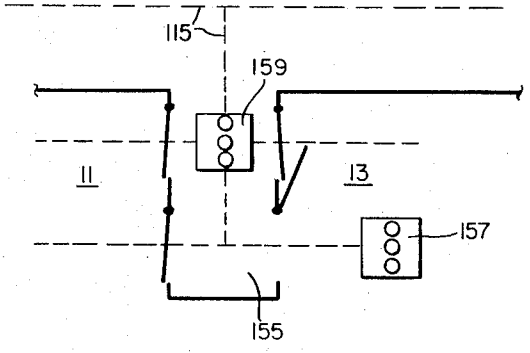
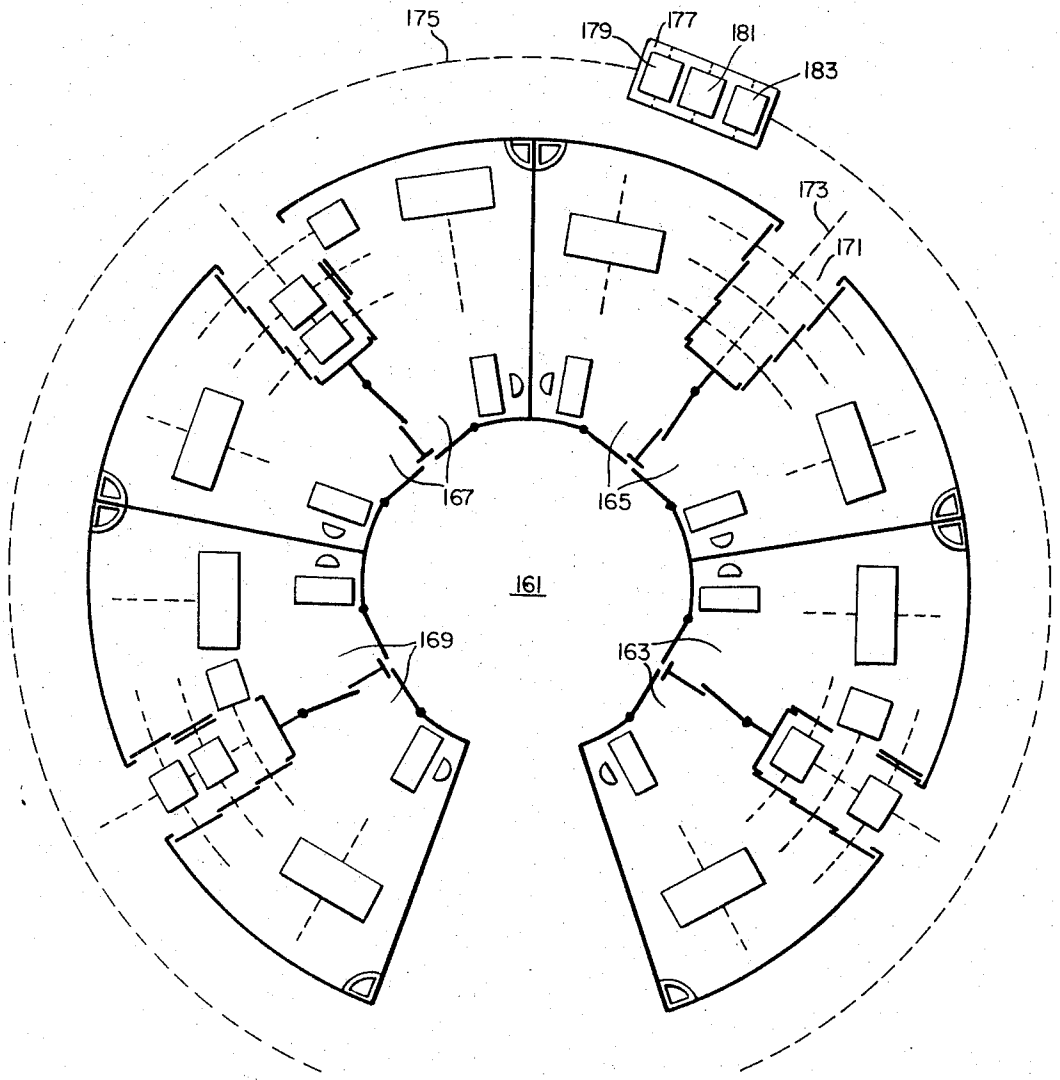


Fig. 12

Fig. 14



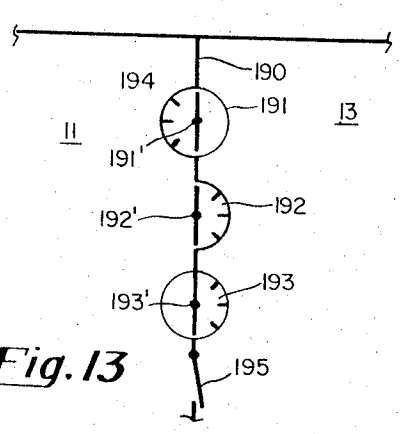


Fig. 13

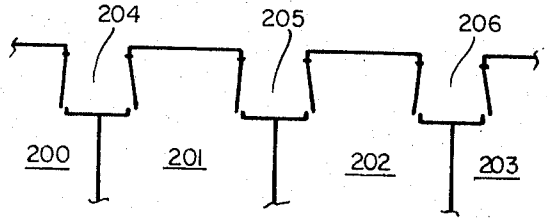


Fig. 12A

MEDICAL OFFICE FACILITY WITH TWO OR MORE EXAMINING ROOMS HAVING A COMMON EQUIPMENT CORE AREA

This is a division, of application Ser. No. 57,981, filed July 24, 1970, now U.S. Pat. No. 3,742,932.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to a building structure having a common equipment area for two or more rooms, and more specifically relates to an improved arrangement of two or more medical examining rooms which requires only one set of patient examining equipment.

There has been a well-known trend of medical doctors to specialize in various medical areas, such as general practice, ear-nose-throat, surgery, cardiology, etc. There has also been a trend for medical doctors to share office examining and treatment facilities due to the expense of such facilities and the fact that many doctors do not need such facilities on a full time basis. These trends are not just recent ones but have developed in various stages over a long period of time. These concurrently developing trends have created a need for medical examining facilities and techniques for use thereof wherein several medical specialists may utilize a common facility including at least two patient examining rooms. One specialist, for instance, may utilize the facility a few mornings a week, another specialist utilize the facility the remaining mornings of each week, and yet a third specialist utilize the facility certain afternoons of each week, and so forth. Each specialist, during his use of the facility, requires medical examining and treatment equipment which is peculiar to his specialty and not often desired by the other medical specialists sharing the same facility. Each specialist utilizes the facility by examining a patient in one of the at least two examining rooms while a nurse or other personnel prepares a patient in a second examining room. When the doctor finishes with one patient in the first examining room he then proceeds to the second examining room. Each specialist generally requires the same equipment available for use in each of the two examining rooms.

Since each specialist requires his own particular type of equipment when he is in each of the two examining rooms, one approach would be to install such equipment in each of the rooms. The difficulty with this approach is that each of the rooms would become cluttered because of the large variety of equipment necessary for each of the specialists while a given specialist at a given time would only be using one piece of equipment in each room. Besides the unsightly character of such an arrangement, the examining rooms would have to be large for storage of such equipment, thereby increasing the rental or real estate costs for such a medical facility. Therefore, it is an object of this invention to provide each medical specialist with the equipment that he needs in each examining room when he is present therein to examine a patient without the presence of idle equipment used by other specialists at other times.

One possibility in satisfying this object is to have a storage room for the various types of equipment from which equipment pertaining to a particular specialty is moved into each examining room for use during the few hours that the specialist is using the facility. However, this approach has certain difficulties since a great deal of time of other personell is required in moving

equipment around if stored in a hodegepodge manner. Therefore, it is another object of this invention to provide for orderly movement and removal of medical specialty equipment into each of the examining rooms.

It is yet another object of the present invention to make it necessary for a given specialist or general practitioner to only have one set of equipment which can be transferred between examining rooms as the doctor alternately utilizes them to examine a succession of patients, thereby to reduce medical equipment cost.

It is also an object of the present invention to provide a technique and medical facility for improving the efficiency of each of several distinct medical specialists when using the facility.

It is yet a further object of the present invention to provide a technique and a medical facility therefor which minimizes the necessity to move a patient to examining equipment.

It is an additional object of the present invention to provide a patient examining room with various items of equipment conveniently located with respect to the patient.

It is a more general object of the present invention to provide accessibility of common equipment to at least two rooms within a building structure while maintaining isolation of each room.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with this and other objects, a medical facility structure comprises partitions forming a plurality of medical examining rooms and an equipment storage area including a common core area located physically between portions of pairs of examining rooms and an enlarged area in open communication with the core area. The storage area is formed in part by partitions common to the medical examining rooms including movable closures associated with openings in the partitions so as to permit personnel ingress and egress from the medical examining rom in a traffic flow pattern away from the corea area. The partitions further include closures for equipment openings in portions of the partitions common to the core area in the medical examining rooms so as to permit access to movable equipment in the core area. The room medical equipment includes a medical examining table located in the medical examining rom so as to permit movement of the movable equipment from the core area through the equipment openings and into the medical examining rooms into close proximity with the xamining table.

For a more detailed disclosure of the invention in its various preferred embodiments and variations, and for further objects and advantages of the present invention, reference should be had to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 schematically illustrates one embodiment of the invention wherein two examining rooms are separated by a common core area which stores a plurality of equipment pods movable into either examining room along their own exclusive paths;

FIG. 2 shows a modification of the embodiment of FIG. 1 wherein different types of equipment pods are utilized;

FIGS. 3 and 4 show yet another modification of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 schematically illustrates another embodiment of the present invention wherein a plurality of equipment pods are carried by a rotatable platform for selectively positioning a desired equipment pod along a common path of pod movement between the two examining rooms;

FIGS. 6 and 6A show modifications of the embodiment of FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 schematically shows a further embodiment which utilizes sliding circular walls to separate the two examining rooms from a common equipment core area;

FIG. 8 schematically shows yet another embodiment of the present invention wherein the equipment pods are removable from a common core area between two examining rooms;

FIG. 9 schematically shows a variation of the embodiment of FIG. 8 wherein an equipment pod is carried by a truck;

FIG. 10 shows a modification of the invention of FIG. 9; FIG. 11 shows a modification of the invention shown in FIG. 8;

FIGS. 12 and 12A show another modification of the invention illustrated in FIG. 8;

FIG. 13 schematically illustrates another embodiment of the invention; and

FIG. 14 schematically shows still a further embodiment of the present invention utilizing a plurality of pairs of examining rooms arranged in a circular pattern and each having their own common equipment core area.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIG. 1, examining rooms 11 and 13 are substantially mirror images of each other. Doors 15 and 17 allow entry of patients and physicians into the respective examining rooms. Consultation desks 19 and 21 allow the physician to discuss matters with the patient in each of the examining rooms 11 and 13, respectively. An examining table 23 is provided to be movable along a track 25 within the examining room 11. An examining table 27 is provided to be movable along a track 29 within the examining room 13. Sinks 31 and 33 are provided in each of the examining rooms 11 and 13, respectively. The sinks 31 and 33 are shown attached to walls of the respective examining rooms for convenience but it may be more desirable under certain circumstances to provide the sinks 31 and 33 with flexible plumbing so that they may be moved along with their respective examining tables 23 and 27 for the convenience of the doctor.

Between the examining rooms 11 and 13 is a normally walled-off equipment core area 35 in which specialty equipment pods 37, 39 and 41 are normally stored. Each of these pods contains equipment for a different medical specialty. The equipment is shown to be accessible from the top surface of each of the pods. The pods 37, 39, 41 are movable into either of the examining rooms 11 or 13 on their individual tracks 43, 45, and 47, respectively, which preferably carried by the floor of the structure in which the medical facility is located. The tracks are provided so that the pods may be more easily moved along a predetermined path but such a guiding means is not absolutely necessary. The pods may be moved between the examining rooms by hand, such as by a nurse when the physician is changing rooms to examine a new patient, or the pods may be mechanized to travel under their own power or by some other automatic means from one examining room to the other. It will be understood, of course, that other means than a track can be used to provide a predetermined path for each of the pods, or the track could be hung from the ceiling, or in some other convenient manner.

The examining room 11 is separated from the core area 35 by a wall 51 having therein three doors (shown in FIG. 1 to be hinged) 37', 39' and 41'. The examining room 13 and the common core area 35 are separated by a wall 49 having therein three doors (shown in FIG. 1 to be hinged) 37'', 39'' and 41''. The door 39'' into the examining room 13 is shown in its open position and the equipment pod 39 is shown on its track 45 to be within the room 13. The examining room 13, therefore, is shown in use. It will be noted that the examining table 27 has been positioned along its track 29 to be very close to the equipment pod 39 for the convenience of the physician. When the physician is finished with the patient in the examining room 13, the pod 39 is moved back through the wall 49 into the core area 35. The door 39'' is then closed, providing a barrier between the two examining rooms. The pod 39 is then moved out into the examining room 11 by opening the door 39' of the wall 51. The equipment pod 39 would then be positioned adjacent the examining table 23 and the doctor may enter and perform services with the patient who has been prepared previously by a nurse. While the doctor is working in examining room 11, another patient is being prepared in examining room 13. It will be noted that occupancy of the two examining rooms simultaneously is the reason that the various doors are provided in the way that they are so that at least one of the walls 49 or 51 is not open so that the patients may be kept separated by sight and sound.

FIG. 1 has been described by showing the use of the equipment pod 39 which contains medical equipment for a given medical specialty. After the doctor who practices that specialty has finished his several hours allotted to him in this medical facility, the equipment pod 39 will be replaced into the equipment core area 35 and both doors 39' and 39'' will be closed. A doctor practicing a different specialty may then take over the medical facility for examining his patients during the next several hours. Assume, for instance, that this doctor is using the specialty equipment located on the equipment pod 41. Before his arrival or simultaneously therewith, other personnel will move the examining tables 23 and 27 along their respective tracks 25 and 29 to a position opposite the tracks 47 along which the equipment pod 41 will be moved between the examining rooms 11 and 13. The doctor with the new specialty then examines patients by traveling back and forth between the examining rooms 11 and 13 while the equipment pod 41 is moved therebetween through the doors 41' and 41''. It will be noted that the medical facility illustrated with respect to FIG. 1 requires very little change when a doctor having one specialty takes over the facility from a doctor having a completely different specialty. It will also be noted that only one set of equipment is necessary for each doctor, although each is still able to have the advantages of two separate examining rooms which increases their efficiency since other personnel may prepare a patient in an examining room other than the one in which he is presently examining a patient. Such a medical facility makes it easier

for doctors of different specialties to share the facility. Furthermore, either of the pods **37** and **41** is available for use by a doctor by opening the proper door into the core area while the pod **39** remains in the examining room. This accessibility provides equipment not often required by a given doctor to be available for those infrequent occasions when it is needed.

It will be noted from FIG. **1** that each of the equipment pods **37, 39** and **41,** when moved into an examination room, faces each of the examining tables of the examining rooms **11** and **13** in different directions. It may be desirable for certain types of specialty equipment pods that the pods be caused to face the same way into each examining room. A way in which this may be done is shown in FIG. **2.** The equipment core area **35** in FIG. **2** normally contains equipment pods **53, 55** and **57.** In this embodiment, the pods do not travel back and forth between the examining rooms **11** and **13** along a straight section of track but rather are provided to travel along curved track sections as a means of turning the pod 180°. Other means could be used such as straight track sections with a pod supporting wheel movable along the long axis of the pod. For instance, the equipment pod **55** has been moved from a position similar to that of pods **53** and **57** along a track **59** to face into the examining room **13.** The equipment pod **55** is shown to have equipment attached to a face **61** thereof and cantilevered therefrom for use by the physician. In this case, the equipment pod **55** need not extend very far into the examining room **13** but only need present therein the face **61** (a vertical surface) so that the doctor using the room may have access thereto. When the doctor moves from the examining room **13** back to the examining room **11,** the equipment is moved along track **59** to its storage position (similar to that shown for pods **53** and **57**) and then back out by means of track **63** so that the pod face **61** is then facing into the equipment room **11** in a position 180° displaced from its position shown in FIG. **2.** The wall separating the core area **35** from the examining rooms **11** and **13** is shown in FIG. **2** to include three sections of sliding doors as an alternative to the hinged doors shown in FIG. **1,** but either of these, and other doors as well, will work satisfactorily so long as there can be maintained at least one wall without an opening between the two examining rooms to separate patients therein.

Under certain circumstances, it may be desirable to minimize movement of equipment pods. FIGS. **3** and **4** show a medical facility in another modification of that of FIG. **1.** Equipment pods **65, 67** and **69** contain different specialty equipment and are each pivotable about pivots **65', 67'** and **69',** respectively. One advantage of limiting pod movement to pivoting is that plumbing may be conveniently provided at the pivot, if desired. Such a simple pivoting operation for certain types of specialty equipment pods may not move the pod far enough into each examining room. Therefore, walls **71** and **75,** which separate the core area **35** from the examining rooms **11** and **13,** are made movable. FIG. **3** shows a situation where none of the equipment pods **65, 67** or **69** are within an examining room. However, the pod **69** in FIG. **3** equipment is oriented about its pivot **69'** in a manner to be placed in the examining room **13.** When the wall **75** is moved to contract the size of the equipment core area **35,** as shown in FIG. **4,** a door of the wall **35** is opened to effectively place the pod **69** in the examining room **13.** When the physician has completed examining a patient in the room **13** and wishes to return to the room **11** to examine another patient, the wall **75** returns to the position shown in FIG. **3.** Each of the pods **65, 67** and **69** rotate 180° about their respective pivots. The wall **71** then moves in a direction toward the examining room **13** to constrict the area of the equipment core area **35** and thereby place through a door of the wall **71** the equipment pod **69** into the examining room **11.** A convenient variation in the use of the pods is to provide the pod **67** with a sink which would be alternated between examining rooms along with one of the pods **65** or **67** which contain medical equipment.

It will be noted in each of the specific arrangements of FIGS. **1–4** that the examining tables are relocated for each doctor practicing a different specialty in order to be adjacent to an equipment pod with his specialty equipmment thereon. In the embodiment of FIGS. **5** and **6,** it is unnecessary to move the examining table to a new position for each medical specialist.

Referring to FIG. **5,** elements thereof which are counterparts of elements of FIG. **1** are given like reference characters. The examining tables **23** and **27** remain in one place for use by doctors of all specialties while various specialty equipment is moved to the table. Non-movement of the examining tables has the further advantage of constantly positioning the patient near a fixed sink and counter top. The core area **35** of FIG. **5** includes a rotatable platform **77** in the floor of the facility. On the platform are arranged the specialty equipment pods **37, 39** and **41** on platform tracks providing for moving the pods. These tracks are angularly related to one another. The examining room **13** has a track section **79** in its floor and the examining room **11** has a track section **81** in its floor. The rotatable platform **77** is shown in a position where the equipment pod **39** may be moved along its track on the rotatable platform **77** into either of the examining rooms **11** or **13,** through either of the doors **83** or **85,** respectively. The doors **83** and **85** are part of walls **87** and **89,** respectively, which walls join into a common wall **91** having a door therein allowing the physician to go between the examining rooms **11** and **13.** When the doctor does travel between the examining rooms, the equipment pod **39** is also changed from one examining room to the other along its guiding track either manually or by use of automatic motive equipment. It may be noted that the rotatable platform **77** need not necessarily be a part of the floor structure of the medical facility if other types of equipment pods are used. For instance, such a rotatable device could be suspended in an overhead arrangement. It should also be noted that although pod supporting tracks are shown schematically in FIG. **5** and in later Figures as single lines, each track will generally include a pair of parallel rails for better support.

It will be noted that after one physician of a given specialty has completed his time of use with the medical facility shown in FIG. **5,** a physician having a different specialty may use the facility by having the rotatable platform **77** rotated to place a track carrying the desired specialty equipment pod along a line joining the permanent tracks **79** and **81.** He then proceeds to examine patients by going back and forth betwen the examining rooms **11** and **13** with the new equipment pod moved between the examining rooms along the track.

A modification of FIG. 5 for use with the type of equipment pod described with respect to FIG. 2 is to permanently attach such equipment pods to the rotatable platform 77 near the outer circumference thereof. Under such a modification, the platform 77 would be rotated 180° to transfer a given specialty equipment pod from one examining room to facing into the other examining room.

A modification of the equipment core area 35 of FIG. 5 is shown in FIG. 6 wherein an elliptically shaped track 93 allows the equipment pods 37, 39 and 41 to be transferred therearound. Crossing the elliptical track 93 is another track 95 which joins the examining rooms 11 and 13 in substantially a straight line. The equipment pod 39 is shown in the examining room 13. When the doctor desires to examine a patient in the examining room 11, the equipment pod 39 is transferred manually or by automatic equipment along the track 95 into the examining room 11. When the first doctor is through and a doctor having a different specialty and requiring a different equipment pod begins to use the facility, the equipment pod 39 is transferred to the elliptical track 93 for storage thereon and one of the other pods 37 or 41 is moved onto the track 95 for use by the doctor in each of the examining rooms 11 and 13 alternately. The embodiment of FIG. 6 may additionally be modified as shown in FIG. 6A by eliminating the track 95 and providing bulges on an elliptical track 94 on opposite sides thereof to extend near the rooms 11 and 13. All three pods would then be moved around the track 94 each time a doctor desired to transfer a given pod from near one room to near the other.

Referring to FIG. 7, an embodiment of the invention is shown wherein the examining rooms 11 and 13 take on a circular shape for the reason that access to the core area 35 is provided by sliding circular walls 97 and 99. The movable circular wall 97 may be supported, for instance, by a ball-bearing track which allows it to be moved either manually or with automatic mechanical motive equipment. The movable wall 97 is dimensioned so that it may be moved into a position for its opening 101 either to coincide with an opening 103 of the fixed wall, as shown, or to stop in front of one of the equipment pods 53, 55 or 57. Other types of pods and arrangements as described herein, of course, could be utilized in the core area. The movable circular wall 99 is similar to the circular wall 97 with its opening 105 shown in a position adjacent the equipment pod 61. The pod 61 has been moved along a circular track 59 to be slightly within the examining room 13 and adjacent to the examining table 27. In this position of the circular sliding wall 99, the main entrance opening 107 is closed off. However, when either of the openings 103 or 107 are closed, the wall 97 or 99, respectively, will be in a position to allow access to or from the examining rooms through openings 109 and 111. When a doctor has completed examining the patient in the examining room 13 of FIG. 7, the equipment pod 61 is withdrawn into the core area 35, the sliding circular wall 99 will move to a position so that its opening 105 aligns with the opening 107. The patient and the doctor can then leave through the opening 107. When doctor enters the examining room 11 through the door 103, the circular wall 97 is rotated so that its opening 103 is adjacent a track 63 to allow the equipment pod 55 to travel along the track 63 into or adjacent to the examining room 11. It will be noted that the moving wall 97 may be rotated to allow the equipment pod 55 to come into the room 11 before the doctor enters, since the door 109 will then be free for his entrance.

When the doctor having a different specialty takes over the medical facility of FIG. 7, the moving circular walls 97 and 99 are then caused to have their openings 101 and 105 stop in front of a different equipment pod, such as either of the equipment pods 53 or 57. This change can involve merely manual stopping of the circular walls 97 and 99 each time the doctor changes the examining room or could be programmed into automatic equipment moving the circular doors and appropriate pod.

The embodiment of FIG. 7 is optionally provided with equipment shelves or cabinets 98 and 100 attached to the moving walls 97 and 99, respectively. These shelves are located so as to always be near the respective openings 101 and 105 of the moving walls 97 and 99 for convenient access by a doctor no matter which of the equipment pods is being used. Manually operated doors 108 and 110 may be provided in the maving walls 97 and 99, respectively, for optional access by a doctor to a pod, such as pod 53, other than the pod (55) primarily in use. Such additional access is provided for a doctor to obtain equipment that he does not use often enough to require placement thereof on his specialty pod such as the pod 55.

The movable wall 97 of FIG. 7 extends along a path 104 from its position shown when moved to a position to provide access to a pod from the room 11. The movable wall 99 extends along a path 106 from its position shown when moved to a position to open the doorway 107. The use of such walls instead of the individual doors described before has the advantages of being more pleasant in appearance, eliminating a swinging door which is space consuming and cumbersome, and automatically assures equipment accessibility and patient privacy. The walls 97 and 99 are preferably made rigid so that their curved shape makes top support of the door unnecessary when a sliding support in the floor is utilized.

The embodiments of the present invention described with respect to FIGS. 1–7 have utilized a core area 35 with all the necessary equipment pods stored therein. Somewhat improved flexibility can be had in a core area of reduced size by other embodiments of the invention to be described wherein specialty equipment pods are movable from a storage area to a core area adjacent to two examining rooms. An example of this aspect of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 8 wherein a medical facility that is a modification of FIG. 7 is described. Referring to FIG. 8, a triangularly shaped pod 113 is positioned in a core area adjacent the examining rooms 11 and 13 by movement along tracks 115 from a storage area containing several pods having different specialty equipment on them. The examining room 11 is fitted in FIG. 8 with a solid slidable circular wall 123 which is shown in a position to isolate the room 11 from the pod 113 while allowing entrance into the room 11 through the door 103. The examination room 13 includes a slidable non-flexible wall 125 shown in a position to block off the door opening 107 but to allow access from the room 13 to the pod 113. When the doctor finishes the patient examination in room 13, he proceeds to the examination room 11 after the movable wall 125 slides into a position to open up the door 107 while blocking off access to the core area

occupied by the pod **113.** Similarly, the solid door **123** is rotated to block off the door **103** after the doctor has entered the examining room **11** to allow his access to the core area occupied by the pod **113.** When a doctor having a different specialty takes over the medical facility, the pod **113** is removed along the tracks **115** to the storage area (not shown) and a different pod having different specialty equipment desired by the second doctor is moved along the tracks **115** from the storage area to the position formally occupied by the pod **113.**

Advantages to the configuration of FIG. **8** are that a small core area only is required and that equipment for any specialty is made available to the rooms **11** and **13** at a common location. Equipment on the pod **113** is accessible to a doctor in either examining room without moving the pod out of the core area. If it is desired to move the pod into the examining rooms, the small core area in FIG. **8** has the advantage of shortening the travel distance of the pod.

FIG. **9** shows a medical facility with square rather than round examining rooms **11** and **13.** A door **127** in the common wall between the examining rooms **11** and **13** allows the doctor to walk directly between them. The major difference between FIG. **9** and FIG. **8** is that a pod is carried between the core and storage areas by a truck. A truck **129** is shown in FIG. **9** in position in the core area between the examining rooms **11** and **13.** The truck **129** has a track **131** thereon for guiding a specialty equipment pod **133** carried thereby off of the truck and into the examining rooms. The examining room **11** has a permanently installed track **135** for receiving the equipment stand **133** into that room. The examining room **13** has a permanently installed track **137** for receiving the equipment stand **133** in that room. When the doctor is through with a patient examination in the examining room **13,** he proceeds to the examining room **11** while the equipment pod **133** is moved across the truck **129** on the track **131** and into the examining room **11** on the track **135.** This movement may be accomplished manually or by appropriate automatic electromagnetic equipment.

The use of trucks as shown in FIG. **9** may be modified a number of ways to provide equipment pod movement between examining rooms according to FIGS. **1–7.** An equipment truck, such as the truck **129** of FIG. **9,** may be modified to contain an equipment pod which is movable thereon in a manner similar to the movement of equipment pods within the core area **35** of any of FIGS. **1–7.** Referring to FIG. **10,** a platform **139** is rotatable with respect to its base (not shown). The base travels along the track **115.** A plurality of equipment pods are mounted on the platform **139** near its outside circumference. Shown in FIG. **10** is an equipment pod **141** in position for use in the examining room **13.** An equipment pod **143** is also carried by the rotatable platform **139** for use by a doctor having a different specialty or may be used to carry equipment desirable but not regularly used by the doctor practicing a specialty for which the equipment pod **141** is primarily designed. As the doctor moves between examining rooms, the platform **139** is rotated so that the equipment pod **141** alternately presents its equipment face between the examining rooms. When a doctor desires to use the medical facility to practice a medical specialty for which neither of the pods **141** or **143** is acceptable, the truck **138** is removed to a storage area along the tracks **115** and a new truck moved into position in the core area. It will be noted that the rotatable platform of FIG. **10** is similar to that described with respect to FIG. **5.** Furthermore, the platform **139** could be modified to have tracks thereon corresponding to the structure of the platfrom **77** of FIG. **5.**

To further show the adaptation of the core area ideas explained with respect to FIGS. **1 –7,** FIGS. **11** and **12** show modifications of the concept shown in FIG. **8** wherein pods are removably inserted in a core area directly without the aid of supporting trucks. An equipment pod **147** moves into a core area **145** from a storage area (not shown) along tracks **148.** The technique for moving the pod **147** between examining rooms of FIG. **11** may be immediately recognized as basically the same as that described with respect to FIG. **2.** When the doctor using the facility changes and the specialty of the second doctor is different, the pod **147** is removed to a storage area on the tracks **148** and a new pod containing different specialty equipment is moved along the tracks **148** from the storage area and positioned in the core area **145** for use by the second doctor.

FIG. **12** shows a variation of FIG. **11** according to another adaptation of the core area concepts explained with respect to FIGS. **1–7.** Two independent pods **159** and **157** have been linked up in a storage area (not shown) and moved along the tracks **115** into the position shown in a core area adjacent the examining rooms **11** and **13.** The pod **159** is shown in FIG. **12** not to be in use. The pod **157** is shown in FIG. **12** to be in use in the examining room **13.** The method of moving the equipment pod between examining rooms is shown to be by guiding tracks. When the doctor using the specialty equipment pod **157** is through using the facilities and a new doctor begins his patient examinations, the equipment pod **159** may be used by this second doctor who would then move it between the examining rooms through different doors of the wall surrounding the core area than the doors through which the equipment pod **157** is moved between examining rooms. Having two pods availabe to a doctor of a given specialty has the further advantage that the pod not generally used by him may contain equipment which he occasionally needs.

FIG. **12A** schematically illustrated multiple examining rooms **200, 201, 202** and **203.** A core area **204,** which may be similar to core area **145** or **155** of FIGS. **11** and **12,** is provided to be accessible from either of the examining rooms **200** or **201.** Similarly, a core area **205** is provided to be accessible from either of the examining rooms **201** or **202.** A core area **206** is accessible from either of the examining rooms **202** or **203.** An example of use for the medical facility of FIG. **12A** is for one doctor to occupy examining rooms **200** and **201** with his primary examining equipment brought into the core area **204.** Another doctor may simultaneously occupy the examining rooms **202** and **203** with his primary equipment brought into the core area **206.** Secondary equipment (equipment used only occasionally) for each of the two doctors is contained in the core area **205.**

Another use of the continually notched medical facility of FIG. **12A** is in a hospital where the rooms **200, 201, 202** and **203** represent patient hospital rooms. Various pieces of equipment can then be continuously made available to each patient room. Such equipment may include the nurses' station on a movable platform.

Emergency equipment is made a part of the nurses' station which may be rapidly moved (tracked) to any of the patient rooms.

An advantage of the medical facility embodiments of FIGS. 8–12 wherein equipment pods are moved into and out of the common core area is that the core area may be made of reduced size compared to that of the embodiments described with respect to FIGS. 1–7. In the embodiments of FIGS. 1–7, a number of pods are permanently located in the core area. To further minimize the size of the core area but without the necessity of moving pods in and out thereof, several specialty pods may be attached to rotatable sections of a common wall as shown in FIG. 13. This forms an exposed core area. A common wall 190 seperates the examining room 11 and 13. Attached as part of the wall 190 are specialty equipment pods 191, 192 and 193. Each pod is pivotable about its respective pivot 191', 192' or 193'. The pods are built into the wall 190 in such a manner that the rooms 11 and 13 remain wholly separated to isolate patients therein. A door 195 is provided in the wall separating the rooms 11 and 13 for use by the examining doctor. The pod 191 is shown with its equipment 194 facing into examining room 11 while the pods 192 and 193 are shown with their equipment facing into examining room 13. If a doctor is using a facility that requires special equipment 194, he merely rotates the equipment pod 191 when changing examining rooms. The pods 192 and 193 may contain examining equipment for other medical specialties. Although the embodiment of FIG. 13 adds some clutter to the examining rooms 11 and 13, equipment for various specialties remains readily accessible without having to duplicate the equipment for each of the two examining rooms and with a minimum core area size. Furthermore, plumbing may be conveniently provided to each pod at its pivot point, if desired.

A preferred overall medical facility having an arcuate array of several several pairs of examining rooms for simultanious occupation by different doctors is shown in FIG. 14. Opening into a common reception area 161 are four pairs of examining rooms 163, 165, 167 and 169, each pair of which is occupied at one time by a separate doctor who may be of the same or different specialty than the other doctors. The pair of examining rooms 165 are shown not to be in use while the remaining examining rooms are shown to be in use. Typical of the equipment core areas of each pair of examining rooms is the core area 171 into which a track 173 extends from a position adjacent a generally circular truck storage track 175. Access for equipment pods out of the core area 171 may be by any of the techniques described hereinabove. It is shown in FIG. 14 that the core area 171 is designed to receive from a truck such as that shown at 177, a plurality of equipment pods 179, 181, and 183 carried thereby. The pods may be carried directly by the storage track 175 but are preferrably moved therealong on trucks such as truck 177. When the truck 177 is drawn along the track 175 to a position opposite the core area 171, each of the pods 177, 181, and 183 is moved into the core 171 along the track 173, one at a time. The medical facility of FIG. 14 gives great flexibility in possible pod combinations and movement.

Although the preferred embodiments of this invention have been described with respect to the Figures primarily for a medical facility to be used by two or more doctors having different specialties, it will be noted that the facility concepts also have advantages for other types of facility use. For instance, such a facility may be occupied by a sole practioner. The core area concepts of this invention provide a sole practitioner with easy access to a single set of examining equipment from two examining rooms. The sole practitioner could practice general medicine. Further, a number of doctors practicing the same specialty could use such a facility. One equipment pod would then contain the equipment most often used in the given specialty while other pods could contain equipment most less frequently utilized. The concepts of the present invention also have utility for building structures used for other pruposes than a medical facility. It shall be understood, therefore, that the invention is not limited to the specific arrangements shown, and that changes and modifications may be made within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A medical facility structure comprising partitions forming a plurality of medical examining rooms and an equipment storage area including a common core area located physically between portions of each pair of examining rooms and an enlarged area is open communication with said core area, said storage area being formed in part by partitions common to said medical examining rooms, said partitions including movable closures associated with openings in said partitions so as to permit personnel ingress and egress from said medical examining rooms in a traffic flow pattern away from said core area, said partitions further including closures for equipment openings in portions of said partitions common to said core area and said medical examining rooms so as to permit access to movable equipment in said core area, and room medical equipment including a medical examining table located in said medical examining room so as to permit movement of said movable equipment from said core area through said equipment openings and into said medical examining rooms into close proximity with said examining table.

2. The medical facility structure of claim 1 wherein said equipment storage area includes a plurality of common core areas located physically between portions of individual examining rooms, each of said common core areas being in open communication with said enlarged area.

3. The medical facility structure of claim 2 wherein said examining rooms are arranged in a substantially arcuate array and said enlarged area extends along the periphery of said array with said common core areas extending radially inwardly between pairs of said examining rooms.

4. The medical facility structure of claim 2 wherein said openings permitting personnel ingress and egress are centrally positioned with respect to the periphery of said arcuate array.

5. The medical facility structure of claim 1 including partitions common to said medical examining rooms and said enlarged area of said equipment storage area.

6. The medical facility structure of claim 5 wherein said partitions forming said medical examining rooms are substantially arcuate and said closures for said openings in said arcuate partitions are substantially arcuate so as to be complementary with respect to said arcuate partitions, said arcuate closures being formed so that said opening for personnel ingress and egress are open when said openings for equipment access are closed by said movable partition and said openings for equipment access are open when said openings for personnel ingress and egress are closed.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,862,525 Dated January 28, 1975

Inventor(s) Donald J. Greenspan

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 1, last line, "personell" should read --personnel--.

Column 2, line 39, "rom" should read --rooms--;

line 40, "corea" should read --core--;

line 46, "rom" should read --rooms--;

line 49, "xamining" should read -examining--.

Column 11, line 39, "several several" should read -several--.

Column 12, claim 1, line 23, "is" should read -in--.

Signed and sealed this 17th day of June 1975.

(SEAL)
Attest:

RUTH C. MASON
Attesting Officer

C. MARSHALL DANN
Commissioner of Patents
and Trademarks

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