Located on the bluffs above the western shore of Lake Superior, Essentia Health is engaged in the construction of a new flagship hospital that will streamline services, redefine the continuum of care, and invigorate downtown Duluth with engaging public amenities.
The outpatient entry and atrium are located along the iconic Superior Street. Responding to the historic texture of the buildings along Lake Superior, the facades of the building provide a refined urban scale with brick or stone. Wood look components frame the glass openings.
A welcoming plaza featuring extensive canopies and a glazed winter garden will provide a hotel-like entry experience. The use of natural planting as well as warm and comforting building material such as wood soffits and textured brick, will reduce visitors and patient’s anxiety and provide a welcoming, clear, and convenient entry for the community.
The public, patients, and visitors may access the roof garden overlooking Lake Superior. Serving as both a patch of green in the urban landscape as well as a means of absorbing storm water, the roof garden will be a serene place for downtown office workers, hospital personnel, patients, and visitors to relax and enjoy the view of Lake Superior.

The upper tier garden will be open to the public, patients, staff, and visitors. The lower garden will be dedicated to the women and children's floor. A roof top lounge will allow patients and staff to enjoy the views during the winter months.
At the entry to the outpatient pavilion, a multistory atrium opens upward and overlooks Superior Street and the lake itself. The multiple levels serve the many outpatient floors that will occupy the pavilion. The open levels allow patients to wait wherever they want, enjoy a cup of coffee from the café, do some work while waiting for a loved one, or go to the amenity level for lunch.
A two-story, open spiral stair will connect the entry level to the second level of the atrium, providing easily accessible seating on that higher level. A curvilinear trellis structure, planters with vegetation, and hospitality type lounge seating all provide an impression of a hotel.
With large glass exterior walls facing the entry drop off, the winter garden is a generous hospitality environment soaked with daylight. Warm wood-look ceilings, a trellis sculpture, a large green wall, planters, and benches provide a garden like feeling.
In the Northland project, this simple idea, bringing nature inside, combined with a hospitality approach to the interior design, were the key design drivers for the project. The design of the interior of the building continues this approach by introducing garden like elements – trellises, planters, vegetation, green walls, and imagery of nature – throughout the public and treatment areas of the project. The imagery, located throughout the project, celebrates the many types Duluth’s landscapes, including the natural lakeside, the Birch and Conifer forests, the creeks and waterfalls, the formal gardens, and cultural landmarks.