



# Optimizing Emergency Department Design for Behavioral Health Patients

Emory University Hospital, Atlanta, GA

Emory University Hospital, located in Atlanta, Georgia, is one of the nation's leading hospitals in cardiology and heart surgery, cancer, neurology and more. US News & World Report ranks Emory University Hospital as the number one hospital in metro Atlanta and Georgia. Emory is continuously augmenting services and expert care, while creating an integrated, welcoming and spacious environment for patients and their families.



## The Project – Emergency Department Design for Behavioral Health Patients

Emergency Departments (EDs) frequently receive patients with behavioral issues that require them to be identified and potentially isolated as quickly as possible. Often, they need to be placed in specially-designed safe rooms or areas that are optimized for security. ED staff then need to be able to monitor, evaluate and care for them in an environment that is safe for both staff and the patients. Understanding this, Emory wanted to create a safe space in their ED for behavioral health patients that would consider the following requirements:

- The ability to quickly lock down any patient who poses a hazard.
- The ability to eliminate access to any objects that could be detached or torn loose.
- Furniture, utilities and openings that limit opportunities for patients to harm themselves.
- Windows and doors that ensure adjustable privacy and are shatter-proof.

### Window & Door Privacy Solution

Project architects selected integrated cord-free louvers from Unicef Architectural to ensure completely adjustable privacy and visibility levels to ensure patient comfort, along with attack-resistant glazing and adaptable anti-ligature operators. Vision Control® louvers-between-glass systems provide a superior privacy control solution for EDs to manage behavioral health patients. They allow staff to have an adjustable view into any room or patient area. The louvers can be closed to allow privacy at night or during examinations, but easily opened to allow a nearly unobstructed view of the patient. The ability to angle the louvers such that vision is permitted from the staff perspective, but not the other way around, is of importance as it means that the patient will not feel observed.

### Results

The Emory ED now features state of the art windows and door openings that ensure fully adjustable privacy. Vision Control® integrated louvers address safety issues in three key ways:

1. Cordless operation: No cords or strings that can pose a strangulation hazard.
2. Anti-ligature knobs: Smooth operating knobs that present no corners or edges that pose a hanging risk from a kneeling or sitting position, or from self-mutilation.
3. High-impact glazing or polycarbonates: A glazing alternative that is impact and shatter resistant, and eliminates the risk of dangerous glass shards while maintaining the louvers in a sealed and protected hermetically sealed airspace.

These elements all contribute to the patient's safety and provide the best possible conditions for effective healing and treatment. They also focus on optimal hygiene. As the Vision Control® integrated louvers are hermetically sealed, they offer maximum infection control and a germ-free, dust-free and maintenance-free environment.

With Vision Control® integrated louvers, sound is additionally controlled far more efficiently than with any other insulating glass unit in the market as increasing the depth of the airspace within insulated glass also increases the acoustical performance of the unit. Vision Control® features double-glazing with a 2" airspace that has a Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating on par with drywall and concrete block walls for superior attenuation capabilities.

Participants:

*Client:* Emory University Hospital, Atlanta, GA

*Architect:* Freeman White, Charlotte, NC

*Integrated Louvers:* Unicel Architectural, Montreal, QC

