

Adjustable Privacy for Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Mercy Medical Center, Baltimore, MD

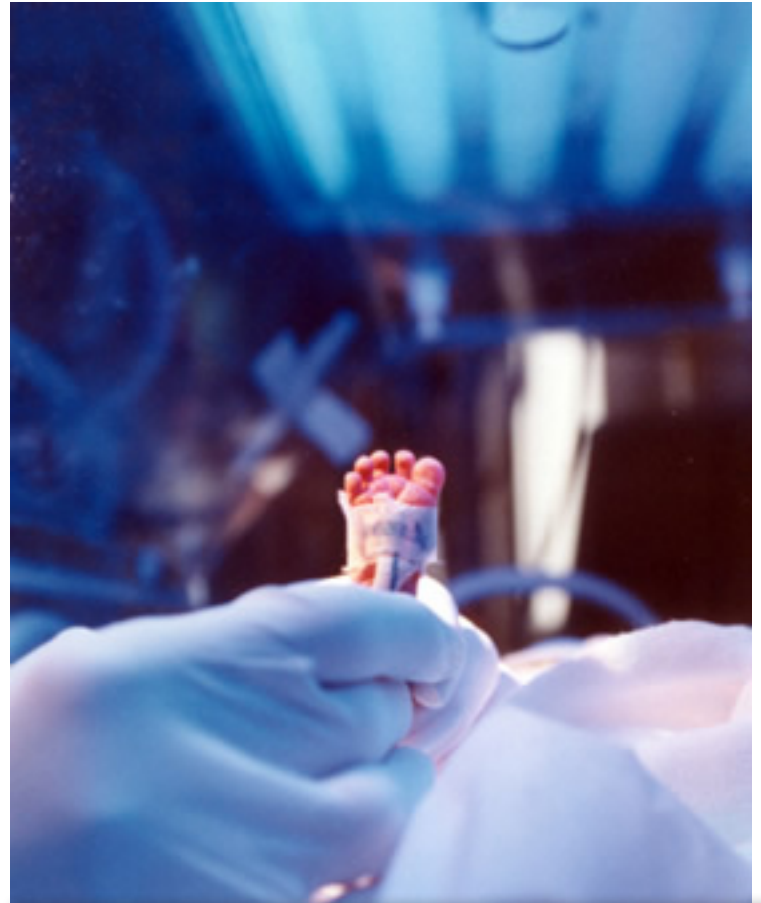
Baltimore's Mercy Medical Center Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) is a Level III-B intensive care nursery that delivers comprehensive care for infants who are born prematurely or with congenital anomalies, and for any infants who require special monitoring and care in the newborn period. The new NICU in the Bunting Center features the latest in healthcare technologies, special amenities for families and a heightened sensitivity for patient privacy.

The challenge

Architects AECOM (formerly Ellerbe Becket) of Arlington, VA, wanted to ensure that the NICU reflected both progressive healthcare design elements and special considerations for patient privacy throughout the facility. Interior windows and doors needed to feature adjustable privacy options to accommodate both the requirements for patient privacy and for medical personnel to be able to monitor patient activity effectively. They also wanted to be able to control light levels in rooms to ensure optimal patient comfort.

The solutions

As part of the overall design approach, Unicel's Vision Control® integrated cord-free louvers were selected for both interior windows and sliding doors to ensure flexible privacy options along with sound attenuating attributes. Vision Control® is a patented, hermetically sealed glass unit combining louvers within glass that can be customized to virtually any shape for healthcare glazing applications. Its advanced louvered glazing technology eliminates strings, ensures alignment, requires no maintenance and provides the ideal privacy solution for ICUs, operating rooms, nurseries and more. Vision Control® is HIPAA-compliant and a winner of *The Architects' Choice Award* from the National Symposium on Healthcare Design.



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| Participants: | Architects | AECOM (formerly Ellerbe Becket), Arlington, VA |
| | Glazier | Zephyr Aluminum, Owings Mills, MD |
| | Door Supplier | Atlantic Door, Columbia, MD |
| | Integrated Louvers | Unicel Architectural, Montreal, Canada |





Interior windows

In 2010, approximately 280 Vision Control® standard panels were installed in the NICU by Zephyr Aluminum for interior borrowed light (glazed wall) applications. These are comprised primarily of 6mm or 1/4" clear tempered glass on both sides, along with special panels made with lead glass for x-ray shielding applications. The glass-encased louvers can be adjusted to block or filter external light sources from entering the room when darkening is necessary.

Sliding doors

Sliding doors move incessantly, especially in ICUs where critical patients require constant care from nursing staff. This continuous movement demands vision panels that will maintain a desired blade positioning at all times. Vision Control® Mini features cordless and perfectly aligned louvers that deliver the uniformity and precision required for fixed blade positioning regardless of activity.

In 2011, Atlantic Door added approximately 80 Vision Control® Mini units into NICU sliding doors. These units feature a thinner airspace, special knob controls and new universal trim kit solutions, and are made with 4mm or 5/32" clear tempered glass on both sides to maintain maximum thickness for installation into the 1 3/4" thick sliding doors. Vision Control® Mini's knob operator is designed to allow adjacent doors to interact seamlessly and without friction or obstruction.

Today

The NICU opened in June 2012 on the 8th floor of the recently completed Mary Catherine Bunting Center at 345 St. Paul Place in downtown Baltimore City. The NICU now admits 350 to 450 babies each year. Mercy's NICU is equipped with the latest technologies to diagnose, monitor and treat newborn diseases and conditions – all in a caring and privacy-enhanced environment.

The future of vision & daylight control

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