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UNC Emergency Dept. Transition Unit

Behavioral health expansion promotes safety and security with Altro

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA



- 1. Altro Whiterock | Oyster | 32
- 2. Altro Whiterock | Flint | 201
- 3. Altro Whiterock | Promenade | 212



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In September of 2020, the UNC Medical Center in Chapel Hill, NC, completed its conversion of a previously used clinical space into a 36-bed Emergency Department Transition Unit (EDTU). The goal behind this renovation was to improve the facility's care capabilities for medical and behavioral health emergencies while providing employees with a larger, more efficient workspace. UNC's newly constructed EDTU includes a mix of dedicated behavioral health and medical beds, with 12 adaptable beds that can be flexed or transitioned between patient populations as needed.

Given that a renovation of this scale would require extensive planning to optimize the available space while adhering to stringent behavioral and mental health guidelines, UNC collaborated with local architect firm MHAworks for guidance. The main priority for this project was to create a safe and therapeutic environment for UNC's patients, families and staff. This would include incorporating durable and hygienic surfaces with essential cleanability and tamper resistance that could reduce the risk of potential self-harm – a specialty of Altro Whiterock wall cladding.

MHAworks specified Altro Whiterock wall panels for use throughout the behavioral health and transitional exam rooms

as well as the patient shower rooms. With impressive impact resistance, Altro Whiterock is capable of enduring the stress of potentially aggressive behavior without chipping or cracking. This prevents patients from removing damaged sections of the walls as a means of harming their caretakers or even themselves. The panels' watertight, heat-welded seams provide further tamper resistance while allowing for truly thorough cleaning and disinfection without bacteria or excess moisture escaping below the surface.

The firm chose Altro Whiterock wall designs for the EDTU's headwall and desk areas to create a warm, home-like aesthetic. This decorative wall cladding range combines the durability, hygiene and resilience of Altro Whiterock wall panels with realistic wood, linen, concrete and metallic visuals, offering a practical design option for healthcare environments.

After Altro Whiterock wall panels proved to be an effective solution in the EDTU renovation, UNC Medical Center proceeded to install them in various areas throughout the facility. These areas included the hospital's pharmacy as well as its primary behavioral health unit.

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4. Altro Whiterock wall designs | Warm Woodgrain | 9904



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