

Benefits of quiet solutions in healthcare

The demand for improved user experiences has spread throughout the construction industry—from commercial offices to apartment complexes to nearly everywhere in between. Gone are the days when conveniences and extra amenities were luxuries. Customers' demands have evolved, and their expectations for more convenient, pleasing spaces are driving the way facilities are designed.

For healthcare facilities, enhanced user experiences start by improving patient care. As the market evolves to keep up with new demands, there's an emphasized focus on treating the patient as much as his or her condition. Providers not only have to ensure individuals receive the correct medical treatment, but they also have to care for their patients' overall wellbeing. This includes stress levels, comfort and mental health.

Among the ways these facilities are adapting to make the patient experience more pleasant is reducing noise throughout the building. It's been proven that excessive noise can take a toll on the healing body, causing individuals to lose sleep, heal at a slower rate and be less satisfied with their overall care. There are a number of audible actions taking place at any given time right outside a patient's room. Hallway chatter, beeping machines, the opening and closing of doors. A study by Allegion™ found that end users in the healthcare market readily acknowledge the impact of door hardware on creating a quiet environment for patients. They cite slamming doors and the sound of door latches as contributors to noise. Therefore, it's no surprise that nearly half of the respondents report they will adopt quiet door hardware within the next year.

Hospital rooms used to get away with the basics—a bed and a sliding privacy curtain. Today, some hospitals have the look and feel of a hotel suite. Even visitors experience pull-out beds and other amenities to comfort their ill family or friends in a comfortable environment.

When choosing a healthcare facility, the quality of treatment and medical care is of the utmost importance. But as the medical marketplace becomes more competitive, patients have more options. And if the quality of care is comparable, given a choice, they will seek out the option that has dedicated itself to the overall well-being of its patients.



It's also increasingly important to provide excellent experiences as patient satisfaction surveys are directly linked to the reimbursements the institution will receive. With hospitals already operating on small margins, reimbursements can make a big difference. Noise is often a top complaint noted in the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey, which measures patient experiences. Therefore, it's beneficial for building designers to plan for quieter environments from the start. In fact, research by Health Facilities Management in 2016 found that nearly nine of 10 hospitals consider patient satisfaction a very important impact on the design of their facilities. Even small changes, like door hardware, can impact the overall noise in the facility.

Understanding the impact of noisy environment

Loud noises affect everyone in a healthcare environment—from patients and their guests to the physicians and staff.



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Patients are already stressed from being in the hospital. This is amplified by the affect of noise on healing bodies. They require rest during their stay, and loss of sleep weakens the immune system, causes agitation and delirium and decreases tolerance to pain. Irritating noise can also elevate a person's blood pressure and heart rate. Overall, it can cause slower recovery rates, with means longer healthcare stays and, ultimately, a negative mindset and perception of the healthcare facility.

The physicians and staff benefit from quieter working environments as well. Those that become more stressed and fatigued in a noisy environment may experience more mistakes, reduced productivity and less friendly dispositions. Loud noises—or even moderate, annoying sounds—are distracting and unpleasant. These can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, which can then impact the level of patient care and staff morale. Impaired focus may have the same impact, leading to medical errors. Reducing the noise from pagers, medical equipment and doors opening and closing can combat these issues—allowing caregivers to better tend to patients' needs.

The impact noise has on both patients and the caregivers can affect the entire healthcare organization. Slower recovery rates lead to longer healthcare stays. Patient's perceptions are based on their overall experience. Were they cared for by qualified doctors? Did everything go smoothly, or were there a few mistakes made by personnel? Were they treated friendly? All of this will be reflected in satisfaction surveys, reviews and future recommendations.

Delivering a quieter experience

While door hardware makes up a small portion of a healthcare facility, it's impact is significant. Architects cannot control the overhead paging system or beeping machines, but they can help reduce noise by specifying quieter solutions. Select exit devices that are specially designed to be almost undetectable and door closers that prevent slamming. Consider door handles for patient rooms that have quiet operation and reduce the disturbance of staff entering and leaving the room throughout the day and night.



Inform your client of the solutions available so the facility can be designed for quiet performance from the start. Decide if the entire property needs quiet hardware, or just select wings. A survey among Allegion's internal specification consultants found that nearly half of their healthcare customers use quiet door hardware today, with approximately 60 percent using these products throughout the entire hospital. Every area benefits from quiet solutions, though some are more sensitive to sounds:

- Intensive care units (ICU), critical care units (CCU)
- Maternity wards, neonatal intensive care units (NICU)
- Recovery areas
- Chapels
- Offices, administrative rooms and work stations where concentration is important

Allegion offers a variety of solutions to cut down undesirable noise—from auto operators to gasketing, and nearly everything in between. A team of experts is available to guide architects through the latest innovations in healthcare, including the [Von Duprin® QM option](#), which controls motion to reduce operational noise featuring damper-controlled re-latching of the rim device and the surface vertical rods as well as damper-controlled lever return on the trim. Another solution to consider is the new Schlage® HL Series quiet hospital push/pull hardware for patient rooms. It features dampened paddle action during depression and snap back to reduce noise associated with lock operation. It's proven to be 50 percent quieter in both the push and pull direction than Allegion's previous solutions.

For optimal quiet performance, these solutions should be used alongside properly adjusted door closers, gasketing and other accessories. Allegion understands that healthcare environments are unique. Contact a specification consultant to explore the innovative solutions that reduce the noise of openings while delivering reliable performance.

Allegion has a team of more than 150 specification writers located around the world who would be happy to assist on your next project. [Contact an Allegion specification writer](#), or check out the [iDig Hardware blog](#) for information and updates on door hardware codes.

About Allegion

Allegion (NYSE: ALLE) is a global pioneer in safety and security, with leading brands like CISA®, Interflex®, LCN®, Schlage®, SimonsVoss® and Von Duprin®. Focusing on security around the door and adjacent areas, Allegion produces a range of solutions for homes, businesses, schools and other institutions. Allegion is a \$2 billion company, with products sold in almost 130 countries. For more, visit www.allegion.com.

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012216, Rev. 05/18
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