Walk-In Bath

With a nifty walk-in bathtub door, seniors can conveniently enjoy a nice, hot bath without the hassle of getting in and out of the tub. The Restore from **Mansfield Plumbing** features a sculpted 17-in., ADA-accessible seat as yet another convenience, enabling the bather to remain in a comfortable, upright position while completely submerging in water. Available as a soaker, whirlpool, air bath or combination, the tub is a great fit for senior care settings. Visit www.mansfieldplumbing.com or **Circle 502**

Easy Access

Offering easy access to mobility-challenged users, **Kolbe's** Ultra and Heritage Series patio doors feature sill ramps and lever handles. Similarly, crank handle hardware extensions can be connected to double-hung windows for easier window operation. Alternatively, motorized operators can be used to open windows, particularly harder to reach setback bow or bay windows, with the touch of a button. Visit www.kolbe-kolbe.com or **Circle 501**

Glass Helps Ease Energy Load in Healthcare Facilities

by Chris Dolan, Guardian Industries

Many professionals agree on the benefits of natural light in hospitals and other therapeutic settings. Companies that work with glass in healthcare facilities, including architects and manufacturers, are setting the pace even as the literature on the topic is taking note. The study on the relationship between daylighting and decreased amounts of self-administered pain medication is a case in point, as is lessened agitation in Alzheimer's patients with higher light exposure (Ulrich 2008).

Facility managers also must consider other important elements when opening up spaces with walls of glass—such as how it affects heating and cooling. Fortunately, advanced architectural glass can ease the load on HVAC systems, controlling solar heat gain in warm weather, while preventing building heat loss in cold weather.

The energy investment in the healthcare industry already is enormous, with nearly $9 billion spent each year in just this sector (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2008). Products and solutions that reduce energy expenditures are critical to the bottom line. As the global population over 65 continues to increase, there will be growing demand for new or retrofitted healthcare facilities to meet their needs. Architects, designers and builders that choose the right glass with the best coatings will ensure they make the most of opportunities to offset energy use for their projects.

Double- or triple-glazed insulated glass units offer excellent U-factors (the measure of the heat gain or loss through glass due to the difference between indoor and outdoor air temperatures) to lower heating costs and improve occupant comfort. Architects and builders who specify low-emissivity (low-E) glass will get a range of visible light transmission of 40-70 percent. These products are available in a variety of colors, with emphasis on the neutral range of light gray or green to slightly blue in reflective color. Natural light without too much heat or glare means occupants are comfortable and aren't burning florescent lights all day, another positive impact on the building's energy use.

These products can save thousands in upfront and ongoing costs and help the facility earn LEED credits—up to 20 total points in four of the six LEED categories. High performance glass will continue to contribute to energy-related cost savings for the lifetime of the building, while improving the patient experience.

University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital

Architect HKS specified Guardian Industries' SunGuard SuperNeutral 68 and SunGuard Neutral 40 for the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. Independent studies have shown that, over a 10-year period, SunGuard-coated glass products can save thousands of dollars in upfront and ongoing energy-related costs for a typical building. For this and many other architecturally innovative and environmentally responsible features, C.S. Mott earned silver LEED certification.