

Gary and Mary West Emergency Department at UC San Diego Health

Architect: EXP

Location: La Jolla, California

Installed: 2018



Project Summary

UC San Diego Health has opened a state-of-the-art unit specialized in treating seniors requiring emergency health care. The Gary and Mary West Emergency Department at UC San Diego Health in La Jolla is the first in California to treat qualifying patients over the age of 65 in a dedicated space customized for geriatric emergency care.

The accredited geriatric emergency department features architectural design elements for older patients, such as carefully calibrated lighting and improved acoustics, safety and comfort.

"Although we have been delivering specialized senior emergency care for more than two years, the new physical space allows older adults to be cared for in an environment that better meets their needs than a traditional emergency room setting," said Vaishal Tolia, MD, MPH, medical director of the Department of Emergency Medicine at UC San Diego Health. "We are very excited to provide this unprecedented service to our senior patients and their caregivers."

The BIOS lights will aid patients and staff in UC San Diego Health's geriatric emergency department (GED) in two crucial ways: by adding a heightened amount of circadian signal to provide alertness during the daytime hours; and by providing a unique wavelength of light dedicated to visual assessment of patients.

"Circadian entrainment is important to the GED staff for health and productivity, especially for those working longer or overnight shifts," said Robert Soler, vice president of research at BIOS. "For short-stay, elderly patients, an important aspect of our lighting system is its unique wavelengths that enhance visibility of medical ailments, such as sepsis—a potentially life-threatening condition caused by the body's response to infection."