

Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
Bureau of Health Care Services
Health Facilities Division
Health Facilities Engineering Section



Interpretive Bulletin: #10-2003	
Subject	Rule Reference
Patient Window View, Unobstructed	1998 Minimum Construction Standards Section 7.28.A10
	Date
	January 29, 2003

Interpretive Bulletins are released by the Health Facilities Engineering Section to clarify sections of the 1998 Michigan Design Standards for Health Care Facilities in Michigan and when research, experience, or technology illustrates present regulations do not adequately address the specific instances or circumstances in the health care environment.

The 1998 Minimum Design Standards state that “a clear unobstructed viewing distance of 20 feet plus one foot for each 2 foot rise above the first story up to a maximum of 40 feet shall be provided in line with the head of the patient(s) bed(s).” The question often arises as to where the starting point begins in multiple story buildings. The standard is concerned with the window view from a patient’s vantage point to the obstruction. This vantage point is the same whether the patient is on the first floor or on the tenth floor. If the height of the obstruction is less than 10 feet (one story) above the floor of the patient bedroom, then the clear unobstructed window view required is 20 feet. If the height of the obstruction is greater than 10 feet (one story) above the floor of the bedroom, then the viewing distance from the patient window must be increased by 1 foot for each 2 feet in height of the obstruction above 10 feet (maximum of 40 feet).

Example #1 (assume one-story equals 10 feet)

The patient bedroom is located on the ground (first) floor of a 3-story hospital. The hospital proposes a five-story medical office building (MOB) opposite the window view from the patient bedroom. In this case, the footprint of the MOB must be no closer than 40 feet from the patient bedroom window.

Example #2

A three-story hospital with patient bedrooms located only on the third floor. A five story MOB is proposed opposite the window views of the patient bedrooms. In this case, the footprint of the MOB must be located no closer than 30 feet from the patient bedroom window.