

Why do we need a nursing home in West Liberty?

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We have had several people ask us “why a new home? Can’t you just fix the one you have?”

The answer to this is Yes, we could. We could make some major improvements such as replacing the roof, installing a new call light and phone system, sprucing up the interior decorations and calling it good. However, we would still have an old building that will not meet the space and service needs of new residents in the future.

One of the things that prospective residents are looking for is PRIVATE ROOMS. We have had several referrals for private rooms, and when they are unavailable, we generally lose the referral. Surrounding facilities are offering private rooms only. So why not just take the existing rooms and make them private? SMH has 35 rooms. Of these, 3 rooms are private and the rest semi-private. That is how we are licensed for 65 people. Our census ranges from 47 – 56. With renovating existing rooms to all private, we would need to reduce our capacity to 35 and not be able to fulfill the needs of the West Liberty community. The 3 private rooms are an average of 169 square feet and 26 square feet for the half bath. The semi-private rooms are 192 square feet each including a 26 square feet half bath. In the new building, the private rooms will be 220 square feet including an 83 square foot full bath with a handicap toilet with hand holds, a lavatory with counter space and storage, and a full shower. No one will need to leave their room in the morning to go to the community “shower room”. Please note that each wing of the building will have a community “spa” which will have a whirlpool tub for those who prefer tub bathing. The private rooms with a shared, 83 square foot bath are 219 square feet each. There is one entrance to these private rooms and the shared bath is in the middle. No resident will need to pass by another resident’s bed or personal items to get to the full bath. Every resident room will be furnished with a full electric 48-inch bed, a writing desk and chair, a chest of drawers, a wardrobe, a large electric lift chair, plenty of lights, and a wall mount flat screen tv.

Another thing that prospective residents are looking for is a well-equipped, spacious THERAPY ROOM. The existing room at SMH is 418 square feet and quite crowded at times. The new therapy room will be 2,048 square feet and have three private 122 square feet therapy/exam rooms and a restroom available for use. There also is a 462 square foot “therapy apartment” equipped with a small kitchen, living, dining, bedroom area, and full bath for residents to learn rehabilitation skills to return home. The new room is more spacious and private for receiving physical, occupational and speech therapy not only for our residents who reside at SMH, but for out-patient therapy for the community.

Lastly are the AMENITIES that prospective residents are looking for.

- **DINING:** SMH has a wonderful buffet for residents to select from a variety of delicious entries. The new dining room/kitchen will offer menu service for ordering entrees that they truly like, much like a short-order restaurant. Plus, the kitchen will be open fourteen hours per day for anyone to get something to eat.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** The current building, when constructed in 1974, was state of the art for its time. However, as technology evolved over the years, the old building did its best to keep up but was always limited to using “wired” technology. Nowadays, so much can be done with wireless technology and how a building is built can depend on maximum use of new technologies. The old building’s wiring would need to be updated or replaced at

minimum just to have an improved wireless technology along with upgraded call light systems, telephone system, medical charting, security, and “cable” TV. Meeting the needs of new residents today have been a challenge, and when asked after their initial stay with us what major improvement they would like to see, private rooms with their own internet and cable TV keeps topping the list.

Prospective residents of the future will be a little pickier with where they go for rehabilitation and what amenities are available. We are positioning Simpson Memorial Home to be the facility of choice for care services in the future.