

AMERICA’S HEALTHIEST HOMETOWN

A weekly report on The Villages’ efforts to become “America’s Healthiest Hometown” compiled by Daily Sun Ombudsman **Larry D. Croom**. Email larry.croom@thevillagesmedia.com. Or call him at 753-1119, ext. 9366.

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Did you know?

Jennifer Jordahl, an advanced registered nurse practitioner at The Villages Health Specialty Care Center, is a huge Michigan State and college basketball fan.



The Bellevue Care Center reopened last week after undergoing a major renovation that improved a variety of features for both patients and medical providers at the 10,000-square-foot medical facility. The building originally opened June 30, 1997, under the name of Family Doctors of Bellevue, which later merged with The Villages Health in November 2012.

Photos by George Horsford / Daily Sun

Positive changes

Bellevue Care Center reopens after renovation

By **LARRY D. CROOM** / DAILY SUN OMBUDSMAN

The Bellevue Care Center has a fresh, new look. That’s because the 10,000-square-foot facility, which became part of The Villages Health when it merged with Family Doctors of Bellevue in November 2012, recently underwent some positive renovations to bring it more in line with the medical organization’s other five primary care centers that are located throughout Florida’s Friendliest Hometown.

For Dr. Joe Hildner, chief medical officer of The Villages, it was quite rewarding to see the changes to the facility that he first opened June 30, 1997, and once was featured on the cover of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce directory. “There’s a new sense of what we are and what we’re about,” he said of the care center, which like all Villages Health facilities carries the prestigious designation of patient-centered medical home. “When you look at this building now, there’s something timeless about it. There’s fresh paint and completely revised landscaping out front. It’s just more welcoming – more open and fresh. And it’s very consistent with what one sees within The Villages.”

Once inside the building, Hildner said patients will see another huge improvement when they are taken to visit rooms next to the new-and-improved huddle zones, where doctors and their medical teams work side-by-side to treat patients in an open space that allows for direct communication.

“It’s hard to communicate when you’re calling somebody who’s around the corner that you can’t see,” he said. “But if you have line of sight – you’re physically near each other – you’re able to really integrate your efforts in a way that is

far more effective and, quite frankly, more enjoyable for providers and patients alike.”

The visit rooms also have a fresh look, with some even having specialized chairs that resemble recliners one might see in a home’s family room. Those chairs are used instead of a certain feature of standard visit rooms that Hildner said he’s never been fond of.

“Very often, you go to the doctor’s office and there’s this exam table with stirrups and fluorescent lights and it’s kind of intimidating,” he said. “You may not even be getting up on that table, but you never really know if that’s going to happen or not and the patient is kind of put a little ill at ease.”

Hildner said that’s where the specialized chairs come into play in a positive way with patients.

“Really, 80 to 90 percent of the time, what we do is visit with the patient, going over lab work and talking about symptoms,” he said. “But every once in awhile, we need to have you lie down and examine you on a table. That chair, in about 15 seconds, can become everything that a doctor’s examining table is. But it’s not always in that state. It’s just a nicer way to communicate with your doctor and his or her team.”

Hildner said another big improvement is the addition of a large conference room that

Coming Oct. 19
Bellevue medical providers share thoughts on the improvements to their care center.

comes complete with a Smart Board that can be used for educational purposes. He said he’s looking forward to seeing patients who suffer from similar conditions or diseases learning as a group – both from their doctor and each other – in the new room.

“That dynamic, where a single medical problem shared by several patients can be addressed as a group, can be a much richer experience for everyone,” he said. “But in order to do a visit like that, you have to have space designed for it. And most doctor’s offices don’t have a space like that.”

Hildner said there also are many other improvements patients will appreciate, such as a comfortable living room where they can wait for appointments and private areas for providers to take vital signs, such as blood pressure and weight. He added that each improvement was designed with the idea of helping the primary care physicians and their teams provide even better care than they could before the facility’s extensive face-lift.

“We’ve realized that the physical plant within which doctors do what they do has a profound impact on the quality of the care they can render,” he said. “The degree to which a facility can facilitate care is, I think, much greater than most people realize. I think a lot of doctors think, ‘hey, I’ve got a waiting room and exam rooms. What else is there?’ The answer is that it’s amazing how much better the experience can be if one’s physical plant is designed right and made with the patients’ interests in mind.”



Dr. Michael Vogt, left, and Melissa Jamison, a certified medical assistant, go over patient charts in the huddle zone at the Bellevue Care Center. The newly renovated area allows for a free flow of information among all the teams of medical providers at the facility, which also helps meet patients’ needs in a more effective manner.



Left: The living room area just inside the front doors of the Bellevue Care Center features comfortable furniture for patients, as well as warm and inviting colors. **Below:** Part of the renovation allowed for the construction of an innovative conference room that will be used for group patient education sessions and staff gatherings. The room also features a Smart Board that can aid in educating patients on a variety of topics.

