

# 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](mailto:larry.croom@thevillagesmedia.com). Or call him at 753-1119, ext. 9366.

Contact The Villages Health at 352-674-1700 or visit the website at [thevillageshealth.com](http://thevillageshealth.com).

### Did you know?

Deneal Sullivan, Pinellas Care Center manager, says her favorite hobby is watching her daughter, Liz, compete in softball.

## All about care center manager Sheri Harwood

Primary care doctors, specialists and other medical providers have been recruited as part of an initiative to revamp health care right here in Florida’s Friendliest Hometown. The Villages Health is partnering with USF Health to bring in family doctors, care providers and specialists who will work as a team, all in the best interests of serving patients. This weekly feature will introduce these innovative medical providers who have joined this effort.

### Why did you decide to become a care center manager?

I’ve been in primary care for 30 years and I love the management aspect. In South Carolina, where I came from, we had always wanted a patient-centered medical home and I was very interested in our paradigm here, because they’ve actually achieved what we wanted to do for so many years. Here, I get to have the benefit of all the different worlds. I’ve got primary care medicine, which I love. I have patient interaction. We’re patient-centered and we’re also team-centered. So we have all of those going for us and we have the best of all worlds. So it’s been a phenomenal experience.

### What is your favorite part of being a care center manager?

Being an encourager for all the teams and working with them to improve their patient-centered skills. Interacting with the patients and making sure that we deliver unsurpassed excellence in our care. And making sure that our patients feel that this is their home, more than anything.

### What is your personal philosophy on health care?



**Care Center:** Lake Sumter Creekside  
**Age:** 52  
**Education:** Florida State, University of Florida  
**Studied:** Nursing, management  
**Years of health care experience:** 30-plus

A person has to be involved in their own health care. That’s the way that they can help their physician manage it to the best of their abilities to get the best health outcomes. If you’re someone who just says, ‘tell me what to do,’ then you’re not personally invested. If you decide and craft a plan for your health care, then the two of you can manage that together to get the best health care outcomes for yourself.

### Creating America’s Healthiest Hometown

## What kind of reactions do you get from Villages Health patients?

“The patients are very supportive. They come in and often are surprised, not only of our beautiful facility. It’s completely set up with the patient in mind, to make them comfortable and kind of remove that white-coat syndrome where they get anxious when they go to the doctor’s office. I think after their first visit, and their second and their third, they do see this as an extension of their home. A lot of relationships have been built already with the care teams. Our staff tries to establish consistency with them so they know who that front-desk person is and who their nurse team is. That’s important for them and they are very happy.”

**Autumn Tripp,**  
Colony Care Center manager



## Care Centers in The Villages

### Primary care

#### The Villages Health Colony Care Center

280 Farner Place, 674-1710

#### The Villages Health Santa Barbara Care Center

1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., 674-1740

#### The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center

2485 Pinellas Place, 674-1720

#### The Villages Health Mulberry Grove Care Center

8877 S.E. 165th Mulberry Lane, 674-1750

#### The Villages Health Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center

1050 Old Camp Road, Building 100, 674-1760



Photos by **George Horsford** / Daily Sun

Jake Grizzard, a project manager with Wiechens Construction, looks over the plans for the renovation of the Belleview Care Center last week. Grizzard is in charge of the project that includes a variety of improvements, including new furniture, flooring, carpeting and paint, as well as a new kitchen, conference room and expanded huddle zone areas where doctors and other medical providers work as teams.

# A special renovation

## Changes at Belleview Care Center designed with patients in mind

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

Crews already are hard at work at the Belleview Care Center as an ambitious plan to revamp the 17-year-old building is coming to life.

The facility, which opened June 30, 1997, to house Family Doctors of Belleview, became part of The Villages Health when the two organizations merged in November 2012.

The renovation is geared toward bringing the facility – which once was featured on the cover of the Belleview Chamber of Commerce directory – more in line with The Villages Health’s five primary care centers that are situated throughout Florida’s Friendliest Hometown.

It’s a time that really is quite exciting for Dr. Joe Hildner, chief medical officer of The Villages Health and the founder of Family Doctors of Belleview.

“That building was designed very thoughtfully, so that the experience of the patients and families that come there is really better than what people are used to having when they go to the doctor,” he said. “So even from its earliest conception, it was special – more patient-centered than people were used to. But that was almost 20 years ago, so it’s time to go ahead and bring the Belleview facility up to current standards and make it a little more consistent with care centers that we have in The Villages.”

The 10,000-square-foot facility is receiving a variety of improvements, including new furniture, flooring, carpeting and paint, as well as a new kitchen and conference room.

But perhaps two of the biggest improvements will be a new area where staff members can hold group educational sessions with patients, and expanded huddle zone areas

**Coming Aug. 31**  
Villages Health doctors, other medical providers constantly talking about patients.

where doctors and other medical providers work in teams, side by side.

“We are beginning to introduce group visits, where a set of patients with the same medical conditions might all come and have their doctor’s visit together instead of just one on one, and that’s been difficult to do in the Belleview center,” Hildner said. “Once the renovations are complete, we should be all the more capable of meeting our patients’ needs. That’s really what drove this.”

The renovation also is special for Dr. Stephen Fischer, who joined with Hildner to treat patients in Belleview in



Jared Taub removes wallpaper in the kitchen area of the Belleview Care Center as part of the work that is being done on the 10,000-square-foot building.

1991. Fischer was there when the care center opened in 1997 with a plan to provide space for three doctors.

And he’ll be there Oct. 1 when the building reopens and has space for six doctors and their teams, which include physician extenders and medical assistants, to name a few. “What we’re really looking forward to is the change in the design that will let us take care of patients better,” Fischer said. “We’re grateful for the paint and the carpet and the new paintings on the walls and things like that, but the real benefit for the patient is the workflow.”

During the renovation period, the Belleview staff is treating patients at the Mulberry Grove Care Center, at 8877 SE 165th Mulberry Lane in The Villages.

Dr. J.D. Steed, who serves as medical director of the Belleview Care Center and has been working at the Belleview facility since 2006, said he is thrilled that his staff has had an opportunity to work closely with a different set of colleagues for a period of time. “What we hope to do here

at Mulberry is have some cross-pollination,” he said. “They’ve got their own culture here and we’ve got our own culture there. So it’s how can we take the best of both cultures and meld them together, and we be stronger when we return to Belleview because of our experience here in Mulberry, and they be stronger because of our being here.”

For Hildner, the opportunity to see the building that he worked hard to design and build so many years ago getting a fresh update is something he won’t soon forget.

“It’s like seeing your baby grow up,” he said with a smile. “So it means a lot to me to see Belleview moving forward. We all hear a lot about patient-centered care now, and health care overall is only just now awakening to this approach of serving the needs of patients. But to the extent that a facility can facilitate patient-centeredness, we were doing that way back in the 1990s in the Belleview building. So for me, this wonderful upgrade is really something of a punctuation mark in a special note in the history of this practice.”