

Renovation of GMH's east wing nearly done

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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\$150,000 project showcases hospital.

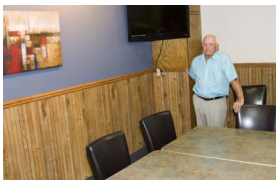
Planting seeds for the future is how Gothenburg Memorial Hospital's administrator describes changes in the east wing that used to house Long-Term Care.

Nearly a year ago, administrator John Johnson announced the closing of long-term care because of fewer patients and increasing costs.

While the south wing was demolished to accommodate the building of a doctors' clinic on the southeast corner of the hospital campus, the east wing was remodeled.

Hild Construction of Gothenburg was hired to do the work which started the end of February.

On Monday, Johnson and GMH assistant administrator and nursing service administrator Kayleen Dudley showed off the approximate \$150,000 renovation project.



Because officials didn't want the rooms to look like they'd just been cleaned out, Johnson said quality of appearance was improved.

For example, a previous dark and tunnel-like hallway from when the wing was built in 1969 was improved with better lighting, paint and carpet.

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Some of the former patient rooms were converted into more spacious offices for the departments of risk and quality control, human resources, social services and the hospital's education coordinator.

Two other rooms will house patients needing sleep-study services and another has been converted into a room where physicians or other staff can spend the night if needed.

An intravenous therapy room is also now available for people who need prolonged antibiotics or chemotherapy as is a centralized and climate-controlled information technology server room and an office for an IT director in the future.

Other remodeled space includes a small conference room, an area that houses a whirlpool tub to provide patient services and a "crossroads" room.

The crossroads room is where old meets new when a \$2.9 million doctor's clinic, now under construction, will attach to the east wing.

When it was part of long-term, the room was utilized for dining.

With a flat-screen television, comfortable seating, cabinets that hold games, beverage and popcorn machines and space for dining, Johnson and Dudley hope families use the space while waiting for patients.

By converting the 10 rooms in the east wing into other health-care related space, Johnson said reimbursement from Medicare will increase which will help the hospital financially.

Johnson noted there are changes in the health-care field, including how doctors practice, because of proposed 20% cuts in Medicare and Medicaid payments.

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Operating independently may become something of the past, he said, as younger physicians operate under the umbrella of hospitals which is already happening in larger cities.

“A lot of young people don’t want to have the responsibility of private ownership,” Johnson said.

The remodel project, and the new doctor’s clinic, will show people what they can experience at GMH.

“That’s important in recruiting new physicians and getting the word out about how we treat doctors and patients,” he said.

Both Johnson and Dudley pointed to the physical therapy department and therapy pool GMH added to its wellness center.

“When it came time to recruit physical therapists, it made a difference,” Johnson said, noting that GMH officials think and plan for the future.

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