



Focus On
BRIEFS

» **New unit addresses expected surge in memory care needs**

A new memory care unit in upstate New York underscores growing demands from facilities serving patients with specialized needs.

“The demand for dedicated memory care services in Central New York has continued to increase far beyond what our community can currently support,” said Kim Townsend, CEO of Loretto.

The healthcare company opened its Memory Special Care Unit in early January by renovating an entire floor of its main campus to support the unique needs of those in the most advanced stages of the disease. After nine months of planning and three months of construction, the new 12th floor unit offers 30 individual rooms.

Features include wayfinding cues; sensory stimulation through touch, sounds, and a scent system to help residents feel calm; and walls camouflaged with landscapes and familiar home scenes to trigger memories, direct residents and keep them safe.

» **New guidelines tout benefits of automatic doors in senior care facilities**

Automated door systems can be a versatile solution for resident rooms, reducing potential injury by eliminating the need to use a heavy manual door, the American Association of Automatic Door Manufacturers said in new guidelines.

Unique benefits include access control, wander management and touch-free operation. Automatic doors come in three types: sliding, swing and folding, and can be fit to resident room entries. Sliding doors in particular are made to withstand the influx and outflow of healthcare facilities.

» **Mannington Commercial adds to LVT line**

The Realities III line of luxury vinyl tile includes 48 enhanced wood visuals and colors, all of them suited for healthcare and senior living facilities, where hygiene, easy maintenance, cost savings and efficient installation are priorities.

These latest wood visuals are designed specifically to coordinate with items from Mannington’s Spacia Collection LVT and Amtico LVT colors, making it easier for healthcare and senior designers to create a unified, high-performance space. Rolls available in a variety of widths also reduce seams, making floors easier to install and clean.



Photo: SDI Productions/Getty Images

Fresh nursing home design combines tradition, new ideas

While they wait for funding to enable room privatization, owners and designers are embracing touches from the ‘neighborhood’ movement

BY JOHN HALL

After long mimicking the hospitality industry’s grand lobbies and communal spaces, long-term care designers are shifting to a “less is more” strategy.

“The pandemic highlighted that the same efficiencies that made skilled care at a large scale possible (and affordable) — shared rooms and units of 40 to 60 people — often comes at the expense of quality of life,” says Melissa Destout, associate principal at Perkins-Eastman.

She is seeing a shift in focus from primarily physical care to caring for the whole person with reimagined nurses stations, activity spaces and more to match.

“In a recent, pre-pandemic project for Jewish Senior Life, we worked with our client to design and build three-story Green House homes to create smaller-scale environments featuring private rooms,” Destout notes. These new residences were followed by a renovation of an existing nursing building to create neighborhoods as well.

Still, this trend toward “smaller and more intimate” is not all-encompassing. Destout and colleagues believe large-scale gathering

spaces are still important.

Residents’ adult children “will still be looking for far more of the hospitality and lifestyle settings which present themselves in a far less clinical manner,” says Gaurie Rodman, senior director of real estate strategy and development for Aptura.

While opportunities for full renovations and new resident rooms remain rare, says Martin Siefering, principal and co-leader of the practice at Perkins-Eastman, there is a strong alternative in creating smaller-scaled environments within an existing footprint.

It “can have a huge impact on quality of life and care,” he adds, noting a recent project by a New Jersey provider to add separate living and dining spaces and a bathing suite to each wing of an existing building.

But as long as the economy is challenged and supply chain issues exist, wholesale single occupancy is on hold, says Dan Davidenko, CEO of Kwalu. “Single occupancy rooms are more of a request than a trend. Waiting to complete projects can have a greater impact on the bottom line as freight, installation and the products themselves can all increase in price,” he says. ■