

# Rethinking Home: Programming Guidelines

## **Introduction:**

The following design criteria reflect suggestions for changing the current nursing home model from an institutional medical facility into a warm, home like environment. The main goal of this change is to afford residents with more choices and spaces that envelop aspects of both public and private ideologies similar to a typical home (such as a front door, living room, kitchen, sleeping rooms and bathing areas).

Due to the fact that many existing nursing homes that have been designed with an institutional medical model similar to a hospital, it is important to develop design ideas that may be used to change these existing facilities into a model that reflects this desire for “home.” These criteria give the designer many suggestions for how this change may be accomplished within the parameters of a traditional, “institutionally” designed facility.

## **Resident Unit:**

Each resident unit should consist of the resident rooms, resident support areas, and resident living areas. It may either be designed as a *household* or as a resident unit with single or double loaded exit access corridors.

- When the *household* unit design concept is utilized, the resident sleeping rooms should be designed or clustered around the resident support and living areas.
- When the double or single loaded corridor is utilized, it should be limited in length between places of visual interest sitting areas or other type to discourage a “bowling alley” appearance.

## **Resident Rooms:**

Private resident rooms are preferred, but semi-private resident rooms may be used if the sleeping areas are visually separated from each other by a full height wall, a permanently installed sliding or folding door, partition, or other permanently installed visual separation such as built in furniture. In both private and semi-private rooms, an exterior window for each resident sleeping area shall be provided to ensure that there is a view of and direct access to the outside by the resident at all times.

Resident rooms shall have a minimum clear floor area of 100 ft<sup>2</sup> (9.29 m<sup>2</sup>) per bed in semi-private rooms and 120 ft<sup>2</sup> (11.15 m<sup>2</sup>) of clear floor area in single resident rooms. This area does not include space dedicated for a toilet room, lavatories, closets, wardrobes, alcoves, door swings into the room, or entrance vestibules.

A three foot (0.91 m) wide area to access each bed shall be provided along at least 75% the length of one side and shall be designed to allow access for the use of a wheelchair and other portable equipment. For planning purposes, a full-size bed is assumed to be 3 feet 6 inches (1.07 m) wide by 8 feet (2.43 m) long.

Each resident room shall be provided with a bedside table (or equivalent), a reading lamp, a well-constructed appropriate bed, and a non-folding type armchair for each resident.

Each resident shall have access to a toilet room without having to enter the general corridor area or a resident bed area in a shared resident room. One toilet room shall serve no more than two residents and no more than two resident rooms. A hand-washing sink shall be provided in each resident toilet room.

The door to the toilet room shall be at least 32 inches (813 mm) wide, side hinged, and either swing out from the toilet room or be equipped with emergency release hardware. Sliding doors that are not equipped with a bottom door track shall be permitted, but must be equipped with sliding door hardware located on the resident room side of the door.

A shower or tub may be provided in each toilet room but is not required. If a shower is located in a toilet room connected directly to a resident room it shall be designed so that a shower chair can be easily rolled in and out of the shower area. If an individual tub or shower is not provided in each resident toilet room, central bathing facilities for each resident unit must be provided (see below).

## **Resident Support Areas:**

The size and features of each resident support area will depend upon the number and type of residents served. The resident support areas may be arranged and located to serve more than one resident unit, but at least one of each support areas below shall be provided on each resident floor.

**Nursing Staff Work Area:** It shall have space for supervisory administrative work activities, charting, and storage. The minimum area required shall be equal to 2 ft<sup>2</sup> (0.19m<sup>2</sup>) for each resident bed served. The staff work area(s) shall be located so as not to be visually or physically separated from the normal use areas of residents and family members (i.e., should not be located in a separate room).

**Clean Utility/Clean Holding Room:** This room is for storage and distribution of clean supply materials. The minimum size of the room shall be 15 ft<sup>2</sup> (1.39 m<sup>2</sup>) with one square foot (0.092 m<sup>2</sup>) of additional space provided per resident served over 15. The required area may be allocated among several clean utility/clean holding rooms or closets.

**Clean Linen Storage Room/Closet:** This area is for the storage and distribution of clean linen. This area may be located within the clean utility/clean holding room or may be dispersed in cabinets throughout the resident unit.

**Soiled Utility/Soiled Holding Room:** This room is for processing and storing dirty equipment. The total minimum size of the room shall be 20 ft<sup>2</sup> (1.86 m<sup>2</sup>) with an additional 1.5 ft<sup>2</sup> (0.140 m<sup>2</sup>) of space provided per resident served over 15, and may be allocated among several soiled utility/soiled holding rooms. Rooms used for the holding of soiled materials need to contain a hand washing sink.

**Medicine Dispensing:** The design should provide for medicine dispensing but not look like a hospital function. This can be accomplished by any combination of the following:

- A medicine preparation room located near the staff work area(s) and equipped with a lockable door. Each room shall be a minimum of 50 ft<sup>2</sup> (4.65 m<sup>2</sup>).
- A self-contained medicine dispensing unit located in the staff work area(s), the clean utility room, an alcove, or other spaces convenient for staff control.
- A lockable storage unit or cabinet within the resident sleeping room or resident living areas may be used to store non controlled prescription drugs.

**Equipment Storage Room(s):** These rooms are for storage of resident unit equipment. The minimum area required shall be equal to 2 ft<sup>2</sup> (0.19m<sup>2</sup>) for each resident with no room being less than 20 ft<sup>2</sup> (1.86 m<sup>2</sup>) in area.

**Housekeeping Room/Janitor's Closet:** This is a small room or closet for storage and use of housekeeping supplies and equipment.

**Resident Kitchen and/or Snack Area:** In any household, the kitchen is often a main gathering point for eating and social interaction. This area may be used for preparing and serving nourishments between meals or for serving full meals at meal time. At a minimum it should contain a work counter, refrigerator, storage cabinets, and kitchen sink and dishwasher. It may also include cooking equipment for use by staff, residents (under supervision) and family, such as a stove or oven for baking.

The cooking equipment shall be designed or secured in such a way to insure resident safety and shall meet all applicable fire safety codes. This kitchen can be supplied from the central dietary area of the facility so that only final food preparation is prepared here.

**Resident Bathing/Spa Facilities:** If a tub or shower is not provided in each resident room, then one tub or shower for every 20 residents shall be provided in a central bathing area. This bathing area should be located adjacent to the resident unit and can be shared by more than one resident unit.

There shall be at least one bathing or spa room per resident unit or floor sized to permit assisted bathing in a tub or shower. The bathtub in this room shall be accessible to residents in wheelchairs and the shower shall accommodate a shower gurney with fittings for a resident in a recumbent position.

Other tubs or showers in this central bathing room shall be in individual rooms or curtained enclosures to provide private use of the bathing fixture, an area for drying and dressing and

access to a grooming location containing a sink, mirror and counter or shelf. A separate private toilet room shall be provided that is directly accessible to each central bathing area without requiring entry into the general corridor.

### **Resident Living Areas:**

**Dining, Recreation, Social and Lounge Areas:** These areas should be provided in each household/resident unit or can be shared between a maximum of two households/resident units. The total area of these spaces shall be a minimum of 35 ft<sup>2</sup> (3.25 m<sup>2</sup>) per resident with a minimum total area of 225 ft<sup>2</sup> (20.90 m<sup>2</sup>). At least 20 ft<sup>2</sup> (1.86 m<sup>2</sup>) per resident shall be available for dining. Storage for supplies and equipment shall be provided in the recreation area.

**Outdoor Area(s):** This area (or areas) should be provided for the use of all residents and shall include walking paths of durable materials, benches, shaded areas, and visual focusing element(s) such as landscaping, sculpture, or fountains. If used, security fencing shall be of a residential design and provide some visual connection to the exterior of the secured area. If an exterior visual connection is not possible or desirable, the outdoor area(s) of the outside area shall be landscaped to be visually interesting.

**Supply Storage:** This area is for resident storage needs and recreation, and shall be on site but not necessarily in the same building as the resident rooms (provided access is convenient). The minimum required area shall be 5 ft<sup>2</sup> (0.46 m<sup>2</sup>) per bed up to 600 ft<sup>2</sup> (55.74 m<sup>2</sup>).

**Barber/Beauty Room:** There shall be one room per nursing home. The area of the room shall be a minimum of 120 ft<sup>2</sup> (11.15 m<sup>2</sup>) and shall not measure less than 10 feet (3.05 m) in any dimension.

**Resident Laundry:** This room is not required but may be used by the staff, resident and or family members and should include washing and drying equipment for the laundering of resident's personal items. If provided they shall be readily accessible from each household or resident unit without requiring the user to enter another household, resident unit, or floor and may be shared by no more than two household or resident units.

### **Staff Support Areas:**

**Staff Lounge:** This area may be shared by multiple resident units if the lounge is located to be accessible without requiring the user to enter into or through any other household or resident unit. A staff toilet room with hand-washing facilities shall be conveniently located to each resident unit.

**Multipurpose Room:** At least one room should be provided for conferences, meetings, and health education purposes. This room may be remotely located on the campus and shall have a minimum area of 120 ft<sup>2</sup> (11.15 m<sup>2</sup>).

### **Administrative and public areas:**

If a new resident entry is designed, a covered vehicular drop-off and pedestrian entrance that is located at grade level and provides shelter from inclement weather shall be provided.

### **Facility Support Areas:**

A central facility dietary area (kitchen) shall be provided for dietary service to residents and others as may be appropriate or all cooking may take place on the resident units. A centralized kitchen area is already part of this project and does not have to be renovated and can be used for food distribution to resident kitchen/snack areas.

### **Architectural Details:**

Interior corridor doors, except those to small closets, janitor's closets, electrical or mechanical rooms, housekeeping closets and other small rooms not subject to occupancy, shall not swing into the corridor. A door located on the exit access corridor, and required to swing outward, shall open into an alcove.