

Dept. of Corrections: Assisted Needs Unit opens at Oakhill Correctional Institution

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 7, 2023

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Oregon, Wis. - The Wisconsin Department of Corrections' (DOC) first Assisted Needs Unit officially opens at Oakhill Correctional Institution this week.

The February 23rd soft opening represents the culmination of a \$7 million project to provide assisted needs housing for people in DOC care.

“The demographics of those in our care has changed over the years. The population is getting older and, like any other agency that provides health care, we have to adjust to the changing needs of our patients,” said DOC Secretary Kevin Carr. “As their needs change, due to advanced age and accumulation of chronic medical conditions, we have to adapt our health services to meet those needs.”

The new unit at the minimum-security institution in Oregon will allow patients to receive additional rehabilitative services following prolonged illness or surgery, and regain independent function. In addition, patients will be able to receive long-term care assistance with daily living activities.

“A traditional correctional setting may be difficult to navigate for people with limited mobility and chronic medical conditions. It may also be more difficult for our medical staff to provide them with adequate care and supervision in such settings,” said DOC Bureau of Health Services Director, Dr. Jessica Gross. “We are excited to be able to offer this level of care to the Persons in our Care (PIOC). Our population mirrors the community, in that it is aging. Therefore, providing a safe environment where PIOC can readily receive the assistance and higher level of medical care they require is imperative.”

The Assisted Needs Unit at Oakhill Correctional will compliment already existing long-term care DOC provides, including palliative and infirmary care at multiple institutions. The new unit will be able to house 65 patients when fully operational, with the upper level having 15 beds for those needing rehabilitative services, and monitoring and care from nurses. The lower level can house up to 50 men who need an adaptive/assisted living environment. There is also an exam room, an officer's station and a nurse's station.

The building was designed by Venture Architects and constructed by Cullen.