

## SENIOR HAPPENINGS

- Calling SheridanAires — current and potential — to Thursday rehearsal practice beginning Feb. 23! If this group intrigues you and you'd like to sing, call Jane Perkins at the Senior Center, 672-2240.
- The AARP Tax Foundation is offering free tax preparation services on Tuesdays at the Senior Center and on Thursdays at the Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library for those ages 60 and older. Call 672-2240 to make an appointment over the phone. Restrictions on what taxes can be prepared apply.
- Would you like an additional 10 percent discount on your driver's insurance? Completing the AARP Safe Driver in-class course entitles you an additional 10 percent off your insurance as mandated by Wyoming statute. The February class is Saturday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sheridan Senior Center, 211 Smith St. Must call to reserve your spot: 672-2240. The cost is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members; pay the instructor at the class.
- Do you know there are several Sheridan Senior Center meal sites throughout Sheridan County? At Heritage Towers, 428 N. Jefferson St., lunch is served 11:30 to noon and at the Tongue River Valley Community Center, 1100 Main St., Dayton, lunch is served noon to 12:30. Both sites serve lunch Mondays through Fridays. Senior lunches are served at Story Woman's Club in Story on Tuesdays from 11:30 a.m. to noon and at the Big Horn Woman's Club in Big Horn on Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to noon. Call the Senior Center at 672-2240 or 672-6079 for more information.

# Feels like home

## Designers take a holistic approach to health-care spaces

BY KIM COOK  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health-care facilities can be stressful places for patients and visitors, with depressing waiting rooms, rows of uncomfortable seating, a blaring television. But designers of some medical spaces are remedying the situation.

A more holistic approach includes mood-elevating colors and artwork. Chairs are angled to look out the window.

Screens offer calming nature scenes instead of newsfeeds. There's softer overhead lighting and skylights. Sometimes, diffusers even waft a gentle breeze of lavender or citrus to mask

the harsh scents of disinfectants and medicines.

Sheila Semrou, a Milwaukee-based design consultant who has worked on numerous health-care facilities, says she takes inspiration from local scenery and geography. Think big windows, natural light and a palette that reflects outside vistas.

"The results can be supportive spaces that nurture occupants and provide comfort," she says.

New research is showing that a lot of clinical design norms are hard on patients, she says. Bright, polished floors can be slippery, and create glare. Bland color schemes aren't so much soothing as uninspiring.

"Studies suggest that some of the best environments for health and healing incorporate a variety of hues, use both warm and cool tones, and vary color saturation," Semrou says.

At the Diane L. Max Health Center in New York City, a project by Stephen Yablon Architecture, upbeat primary and neon colors were used on mid-century-style seating, facades and to define different areas of the building.

On the other hand, in the reception area of Memorial Sloan Kettering in West Harrison, New York, blonde terrazzo floors, rift white oak and chic, light blue chairs clad in walnut veneer create a

serene space, designed by EwingCole.

In colder climes, a fireplace can add a welcoming feel at little cost, says Carolyn BaRoss, who leads a health-care interior design division at the New York firm Perkins and Will.

"A number of our projects in Canada and the northwestern U.S. have included fireplaces as part of the waiting areas and other lounges," she says. "We try to specify ones that look the most realistic and surround them with interesting materials. We've used both electric and gas fireplaces. They provide a source of warmth, but are fitted with a protective enclosure for safety."



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Fri - Cheeseburger Deluxe		Pasta e Fagioli
Sat - Pork Chop w/ Mushroom Gravy		

\*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue - Burgers & Bluegrass	7:00 p.m.	S.C. \$2.00	Dining Room
Wed - B.A.M. Exercise	9:30 a.m.		Community Room
Thu - SheridanAires	9:30 a.m.		Community Room
Fri - Dominoes Chicken Foot	9:30 a.m.		Dining Room
Sat - Breakfast French Toast	7:30 to 9:00 a.m.		Dining Room

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street  
Building hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mondays - Fridays  
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Weekends and Holidays  
211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801  
Home Delivered Meals (307) 672-6079  
Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon - Fri



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## Constructing new space at the Senior Center

Jake Erramouspe, an employee for Dick Anderson Construction, works on the new lobby for the Sheridan Senior Center. The center's lobby and front entrance are being expanded to include a Grab-n-Go food kiosk and a fireplace. Funding for construction at the Senior Center was raised through a volunteer-led capital campaign committee.

## Oppose vouchers for Medicare? Let your representatives know

Proposals to turn Medicare into a voucher system would take health care in precisely the wrong direction — pushing up costs for current and future retirees, and eroding protections that Americans have earned through many years of hard work and taxes.

Yet, in a short-sighted attempt to save money, vouchers are being promoted on Capitol Hill as an answer to rising costs.

Unfortunately, they are the wrong answer. Vouchers pose troubling risks for 89,345 Wyoming residents who are currently in Medicare, not to mention the 118,734 age 50 and older who will enter the program in the next 15 years.

Fortunately, President Trump has promised to protect Medicare and Social Security, at one point telling older voters: "I am going to protect and save your Social Security and your Medicare. You made a deal a long time

ago." Congress needs to follow the president's lead. Vouchers would break a basic promise of Medicare, which is to provide a guaranteed benefit package. Under a voucher system, sometimes known as premium support, the basic promise could be tossed aside. Instead, consumers would get a fixed dollar amount to help pay for care in the private marketplace.

And if that amount turns out to be insufficient, tough luck. Seniors and future retirees could have to pay thousands of dollars out of their own pockets at a time when they can least afford it.

In our own state of Wyoming residents in poor health would quickly feel the pain of a voucher system.

That includes the 28 percent that have two or three chronic health conditions and rely on care they can afford.

Many with limited resources could end up in health plans that limit their choice of doctors and demand high out-of-pocket spending to get needed care.

Nationally, one in four Medicare beneficiaries has incomes below \$14,350, and

one in two has incomes below \$24,150. Raising their health care costs could be disastrous, forcing many to choose between going to the doctor and paying for other necessities.

The risks posed by a voucher proposal go against President Trump's commitment to protect Medicare. Older voters helped decide the election and they're counting on Congress to abandon this proposal.

The risks are widely recognized.

For example, studies by the Congressional Budget Office and Medicare Payment Advisory Commission suggest that moving to vouchers could hit most Medicare beneficiaries in the pocketbook.

Yes, Medicare needs to be strengthened for future generations, but shifting costs to seniors and workers who've paid into the system their entire working lives is the wrong approach. We can put Medicare on stable ground with commonsense solutions, such as clamping down on drug companies' high prices, improving coordination of care and use of technology, and cutting out over-testing, waste and fraud.

For example, the average

cost for a year's supply of a prescription drug more than doubled since 2006 to over \$11,000 in 2013. That's about three-fourths of the average Social Security retirement benefit, or almost half the median income of people on Medicare. Multiply this by the two to four drugs that many seniors take, and you see the magnitude of the problem.

AARP is committed to working with elected officials of both parties to ensure that Medicare remains financially stable. But solutions must be responsible.

On behalf of our 87,911 members in Wyoming and 38 million throughout the nation, AARP will continue to champion a Medicare system that delivers on the deal Americans have counted on and deserve.

If you share our opposition to vouchers for Medicare, please contact your members of Congress to make sure your voice is heard.

**GUEST COLUMNIST SAM SHUMWAY** is the state director for AARP Wyoming based in Cheyenne. Center Stage is written by friends of the Senior Center for the Sheridan Community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.

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