



## New Wichita home for those with dementia to include on-site oral care facility

BY KELSEY RYAN

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ComfortCare Homes, a Wichita-based Alzheimer's care group, is partnering with GraceMed Health Clinic to provide preventive oral health care at its newest location, Founders Crest.

"We see this as a pivotal change in our overall way of doing business," said Doug Stark, president of ComfortCare.

The \$2.6 million home, which is scheduled to open in early 2014, will have a designated medical suite for GraceMed to bring in oral hygiene equipment, Stark said.

Founders Crest will house 26 people with advanced dementia in mostly private rooms at 6887 Rockhill Lane, just southeast of 21st and Woodlawn.

This is the first new construction home for ComfortCare, which was started in 1993 and has eight Wichita locations that house 58 residents. It also has licensees in Kansas City, Baldwin City, Pittsburg, Omaha and soon in Newton.

"In all of our other eight homes, our model is to take large, elegant ranch homes in upscale neighborhoods and convert to special care for people with dementia," he said.

For this concept, Stark said, "I went straight to (architect) Tom Compton and said I want to build a building that goes much farther in accommodating our residents that are very progressed in the disease, but I want when it's done to look like somebody's \$2.5 million home in Vickridge."

Stark says ComfortCare is adamant about providing a home environment rather than one that is institutional.

Residents of Founders Crest will have oral cleanings on a quarterly basis, Stark said. ComfortCare will also transport residents from its other homes to the site for cleanings and check-ups.

GraceMed oral hygienists are receiving training on how to work with people who have Alzheimer's, said Venus Lee, GraceMed's associate executive officer.

They will focus on preventive oral care and will be able to refer residents to a dentist or specialist if necessary.

Residents will be billed for the cost of the cleanings through insurance or on a sliding fee scale, Lee said.

"It's extremely difficult when you're trying to provide oral care to someone in their mid-80s who has severe dementia," Stark said. "They would rather do anything in the world than open their mouth and have you work on their teeth. The overall health of body, heart disease, many times starts as a problem in the mouth. There are lots of things if you have bad oral care that lead to so many other dysfunctions."

Although GraceMed offers dental outreach to other nursing homes in the area, this is the first time it will have a designated space for a clinic, Lee said.

"Our goal is to just take care of as much of the community as possible with oral health as we can," she said. "We want to be the bridges (over) the gaps."

Project architect is Tom Compton of Compton Associates and general contractor is Accel Construction.

For more information on the new building, call 316-685-3322 or go to [www.founderscrest.com](http://www.founderscrest.com) (<http://www.founderscrest.com/>).