

Green Hills Senior Health Center Opens

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Seniors will once again have access to the former Easter Seals site as a new adult day care program opens in Green Hills featuring social and physical activities. COURTESY OF JAMES FENTRESS ARCHITECTURE

New Purpose for Former Easter Seals Property

The Woodmont Boulevard building that formerly housed the Easter Seals Center, a familiar Green Hills landmark, has gotten a new lease on life as an adult day care center providing weekday care, social activities and therapeutic assistance for local seniors.

Meridian Health Services Holdings, Inc. has purchased the front portion of the property, vacant since May 2009, and plans to open the facility in late March or early April as the Green Hills Senior Health Center for adult day care and rehabilitation services.

The \$2.5 million cash purchase of the property by California-based Meridian is the company's first venture into senior daycare, and

its first venture east. Meridian, which was founded in 1999, owns and operates 15 rehabilitation and senior health services facilities offering skilled nursing, rehabilitation, assisted living and turn-key staffing solutions to professional caregivers and facilities in its headquarters state.

Paul Miller, executive director of the Green Hills Senior Health Center, conceived the project and approached Meridian with the concept. Miller has a healthcare business background over the last 30 years, working with Medicare, community mental health projects, Equitable Insurance and TennCare regulations and guidelines. He brought experience with providers, state regulations, healthcare administration, oversights and delivery to the table.

Statistics show elderly citizens are the fastest growing population segment in the United States, with the number of people over 65 years of age projected to swell to 53 million by 2020. As of 2010, one in five Americans is over the age of 65. Additionally, nearly one of every four U.S. households provides care to a relative or friend aged 50 or older.

"I was looking for space that would accommodate the center, and ... when I was shown the property on Woodmont ... I realized the potential of the building immediately," Miller said. "It is perfect and has the location and amenities to deliver the services that we plan to offer.

"I had developed the business plan. In scouting for investors, I was put in touch with Meridian, and they were interested immediately. They felt that it fit perfectly with their corporate vision," he continued.

After a recent inspection of the renovations of the center, James Preimesberger, chairman and president of Meridian Health Services Holdings, said, "The Green Hills Senior Health Care Center is Meridian's first venture outside of California, and we feel an immense amount of synergy in and from the Nashville market. Between now and opening day, we are focused on introducing our organization and our services to seniors and to physicians and providers in the senior health community.

Green Hills Senior Health Center

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"As the for-profit healthcare capital of the country," he continued, "Nashville is a dynamic place, and we are thrilled to join the community and to be able to reopen an amazing facility and bring back valued services to seniors in the Green Hills area."

Preimesberger added, "We have been overwhelmed by the positive business environment and the overall hospitality here in Nashville, and we're looking at a number of opportunities to grow our presence here."

Miller said the center, which can serve 100 patients, will have a registered nurse, physical therapists, certified nursing assistants, fitness trainers and lifeguards on staff and be open five days a week, "although we will consider Saturdays, if there is a demand," he added.

The non-residential day program, either full or half day, will be designed to engage seniors with individual and group activities, programs, lessons, salon services and entertainment.

"We can make arrangements to take patients to the doctor, administer medications and have the staff to provide assistance for day-to-day needs," Miller said. He added that patients could receive their home healthcare treatment at the facility, which will provide walkers and other mobility equipment so patients do not have to transport their equipment each time they come.

Miller said renovations to the building's exterior would be mainly cosmetic — painting and landscaping — and interior repairs would bring the building into compliance with local building codes.

The building's pool, which is the only heated saltwater pool in Nashville, is being refurbished and brought up to codes with the addition of ramps and a hydraulic lift. Miller pointed out the entire pool is five feet deep, which makes it a good setting for aquatic programs, as well as lap swimming.

"We're going to bring back the Easter Seals water programs for arthritis patients that were so popular," he added.

The facility will accept TennCare, medical private payment insurance and long term care insurance.

"We hope to delay or prevent the patient having to be in a nursing home," Miller said.

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