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Anchorage Pioneer Home to open newly remodeled floor as a ‘neighborhood’ serving elders who experience dementia with complex behaviors

December 21, 2021 ANCHORAGE — The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is announcing plans to open a Complex Behavioral Neighborhood serving people age 60 and older who experience complex behaviors related to dementia. The addition, on the newly remodeled 4th floor of the Anchorage Pioneer Home’s Southside Building, will serve up to nine elders and is expected to accept its first residents in early 2022.

The [Anchorage Pioneer Home](#) is one of six licensed assisted-living homes owned and operated by the State of Alaska [Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes](#). The new neighborhood, which will be one of four distinct living communities or “neighborhoods” in the home, makes it possible for the Pioneer Homes to serve residents requiring the highest level of dementia care.

Features of the Complex Behavioral Neighborhood include high staff-to-resident ratios, as well as on-site primary care provider visits and behavioral consultations, activities for people with dementia, and specialized nursing services—all of which are designed to provide a higher quality of living for elders. In addition to routine dementia care training, staff will attend specialized continuing-education trainings in person-focused care, learning how to recognize and work with residents’ changing abilities, as well as techniques for avoiding and de-escalating conflict.

“Dementia can cause people to feel fearful, confused, or frustrated, and that’s often the source of ‘complex behaviors,’ such as agitation,” said Anchorage Pioneer Home Administrator Richard Saville. “Specialized trainings will give our staff tools to help de-escalate such behaviors and to achieve the goal of residents that are living as independently as possible.”

“With this new neighborhood, up to nine Alaskans living with complex behaviors related to dementia will have a secure place to call home,” said Alaska Pioneer Homes Division Director Heidi Hamilton. “We’re glad to be able to provide the care and understanding they need. This addition to the Anchorage Pioneer Home will help keep some of our most vulnerable elders safe.”

Planning for the Complex Behavioral Neighborhood was developed over years of collaborative effort between numerous state and community partners, noted DHSS Deputy Commissioner Clinton Lasley. “The need for this neighborhood has been a long time in the making,” said Lasley, who is also the former division director of Alaska Pioneer Homes. “We want to thank the Dunleavy Administration, as well as all of the lawmakers who worked on this new addition, for providing support and funding through the budget process.”

Alaska Pioneer Homes have been providing elder Alaskans a home and community since 1913.

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