

# Work set to begin in spring on East Jefferson senior community

BY SHERRI WELCH  
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Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, United Methodist Retirement Communities and Henry Ford Health System plan to begin work in May on the first phase of the \$35 million senior community planned near Detroit's east riverfront.

Housed in one of two former Parke-Davis buildings purchased in December from the UAW/GM Center for Human Resources for \$700,000, the initial phase of the East Jefferson Neighborhood Project will include one of the city's first assisted living centers, with 74 affordable and six market-rate units.

It also will house a second Detroit location for Henry Ford's Center for Senior Independence, providing seniors with medical and social services both at the center and off-site, enabling them to live independently in their own homes.

A \$2 million grant from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan's Detroit Neighborhood Fund is supporting the project, with the first phase scheduled for completion in July 2012.

"Particularly in the East Jefferson neighborhood, there is a growing population of older adults (and) not many options ... for assisted living, affordable or otherwise," said John Thorhauer, president and CEO of United Methodist Retirement Communities.

"Unfortunately, many people (have to) move to the suburbs for health care as they age. That should not be necessary. They should be able to stay in their own communities."

Located two blocks off the Detroit River, the project site is bounded by Franklin Street to the north, Wight Street to the south, McDougall Street to the west and Walker to the east.

The nonprofits are gathering commitments for tax credits, loans and grants from the state, Wayne County and the City of Detroit that will total an initial \$24.6 million with their own investments.

As reported by *Crain's* in August, the affordable assisted living component of the project is the second of five pilot sites across the state selected for funding by the Michigan State Housing Development

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Authority, following another built by Genesis Nonprofit Housing Corp. in Grand Rapids.

In addition to 350 construction jobs, the first phase of the project should create 183 health care jobs and have an estimated economic impact of \$250 million in the first decade, the organizations said.

Monthly lease rates haven't yet been established, but they will be subsidized in exchange for the MSHDA tax credits, said Dawn Magretta, vice president of development and public affairs at PVM.

The initial work is part of a two-phase senior community planned by PVM that will also offer independent living, residential nursing home units and a community café when completed, in addition to the affordable assisted living and senior health care, wellness and adult day care services provided at Henry Ford's Center for Senior Independence.

As part of the national Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, the Henry Ford center will provide nursing home-eligible seniors from the immediate neighborhood with care and assistance to improve their quality of life. It's an innovative approach to health care delivery that seeks to balance the medical needs of the frail elderly with their social and economic needs, said John Polanski, president and CEO for community care services at Henry Ford.

The program is funded through Medicare and Medicaid.

The center might, for example, bring a frail senior from her home to the center five days a week to get assistance bathing, have her hair done, obtain medical care and attend social events. It could even

provide assistance with laundry or other chores around the home, Polanski said.

"The market dynamics (in the East Jefferson neighborhood) obviously suggest there's an obscene number of frail elderly within that market who could certainly use these services," he said.

With the center, "we're able to keep them out of a nursing home by providing those services, which the state has said ultimately improves one's quality of life and reduces the cost of health care," Polanski said.

PVM plans to begin the second phase of the East Jefferson Neighborhood project in 2012, renovating the second building to include a greenhouse environment for about two dozen seniors and a community café on its ground floor.

Plans also call for construction of a new building to house 50-60 independent living senior apartments, Myers said.

Co-locating the affordable assisted living with independent housing and health care services was attractive because residents could choose to remain on the campus when their health care needs increased, Thorhauer said.

When completed, the East Jefferson Neighborhood Project will create 150 to 170 housing units. But it is expected to provide services through the health center and community café for about 750 residential seniors from the community and surrounding neighborhoods, Myers said.

The value of the East Jefferson project is greater than the idea of just retaining residents and creating jobs, he said.

Seniors "bring so much of the heritage we built Detroit on ... (and) a value to the quality of life of the community in terms of the rich wisdom they bring and the experiences they've had," Myers said.

With the new University Prep Math and Science High School that opened last fall just two blocks away, "we see the intergenerational opportunities to be tremendous ... students will be able to volunteer and potentially be employed as part of the East Jefferson Project," he said.

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