Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly Center Design
Roughly 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 every day. This rate will continue into 2029, exponentially adding to our retired population. Existing infrastructures for senior care cannot support these numbers. Several trends that affect the care for senior adults, including new requirements by the Affordable Care Act, the extended life expectancy and expectations of activities within their older years, and ubiquitous technology options, have the opportunity to greatly impact the spaces, activities, and partnerships for the future of this industry. Adult day care programs are becoming a more popular alternative for seniors and their families to provide the right care at the right time.

**PACE**

One of these alternatives, The Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), was first developed in 1973. As of late, the program model has spread to reach more than 100 operating centers, across 31 states. PACE is an adult day care program model that creates a singular space for services such as

- Access to prescriptions
- Physical therapy
- Physical examinations
- Recreational therapy
- Home care when necessary
- Counseling
- Social interaction
- Meal services
- Social services

The PACE model relies heavily on a “continuum of care” process that we have not seen implemented in our health care systems previously. Once enrolled, a PACE participant joins the program for life. Consequentially, PACE is extremely stringent in their enrollment criteria.
To qualify for eligibility in a PACE center, a person needs to be over the age of 55, be certified to receive nursing care, and live near a PACE center. Because PACE centers are built based upon the density of need within a specific zip code, some people may qualify in other aspects, but live outside a PACE area. PACE is working to close these gaps, implementing a global approach to elder care, an effort in which they have made considerable strides over the last couple of decades.

If a person qualifies under all the prerequisites, he or she may still be denied due to a lack of space within the program. However, there is an extensive waiting list that people can work their way up. PACE programs are well worth the competitive entrance process.

The annual cost for assisted living is $43,756 per year. The average nursing home care is between $82,230 and $92,977 per year. The cost for adult day services, on the other hand, is roughly $72 a day and is often not used every day. The cost for PACE varies by state.

Community is a key element for the PACE program. The entire purpose behind the model is to provide avenues in which seniors can receive the medical and social care they need from within their own community.

This will allow seniors to stay at home longer, whether that be in their own home or the home of a caregiver. Keeping seniors in their home longer provides more benefits than just financial: remaining in a familiar environment improves both physical and mental well-being.

**SPACE**

As PACE programs pop up in communities across the nation, they must approach the idea of designing these facilities from either a new construction or a redesign perspective. There are pros and cons to each perspective. Less demolition is involved when renovating a pre-existing space, which is not only cost effective, but helps to better meld the facility with its community. New construction, on the other hand, allows for a customized solution.

In Muskegon, the LifeCircles PACE center moved into a building previously occupied by a grocery store. The site was perfect, located in an active neighborhood within the area. Getting
the right site for each specific PACE center is critical to meet the needs of participants and to take advantage of the right building in the right location that will best help to accomplish the greater mission of serving seniors. The center is now in its fifth year and expanding, pushing their program numbers from 225 to 350.

Their expansion will implement the same elements of their original design process. With PACE centers, one of the key objectives is to create a space that has neither a feeling of institutionalization nor coldness. At LifeCircles, colors were specifically chosen to reflect the community’s culture, and materials and finishes are warm and inviting, while being durable. Fish tanks allow for participants who may not be especially mobile to have something active to watch. Warm natural light is conducive to therapeutic environments and prevents a space from feeling sterile, so windows are abundant at LifeCircles. The space must also conform to the specific needs of seniors. For example, walking surfaces need to be tailored to suit a population with limited mobility. In order to promote safety thresholds of considerable level transition need to be removed, allowing seniors to move freely.

$72 On average, adult day services amount to roughly $72 a day

LifeCircles will be adding a new and improved covered drop off area large enough to accommodate multiple shuttle buses at once. Participants and staff will both have access to green space to quietly enforce the importance of ties to nature in the healing and therapeutic process. Elements such as these are what make PACE centers exceptional in their design. The aesthetic of the space reflects the overall attitude towards the program. With so many seniors enthusiastic about joining the program, it only makes sense that that excitement is reflected within the space.

The PACE center has been extremely successful. Groups nationwide tour the facility to inspect its creative design. By numerous accounts, the center looks nothing like a medical care facility. That’s the goal for PACE centers: to be a part of and serve the community. They want to be a part of and serve the community. Progressive AE works with leadership teams of PACE centers to lead the design process, creating spaces that meet the specific needs of each senior population in a way that is both warm and inviting.
Sources


