

Nursing home revamps urged

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Transforming more nursing homes into happier places for residents may require an uprising of family members demanding better, the leader of a nursing home reform movement said in Rochester Wednesday.

Care for people with developmental disabilities was deinstitutionalized decades ago when mothers wouldn't accept otherwise, said Dr. Bill Thomas, 49, founder of the Eden Alternative non-profit effort. "I'm looking forward to the arrival of daughters from hell. What

I really mean is pressure from society, from the community, to say this is unacceptable."

Thomas, who lives in the Ithaca area, travels the world to help nursing homes eliminate the loneliness, helplessness and boredom that their residents suffer. He spoke at St. John's nursing home Wednesday.

St. John's plans to build at least 20 so-called "green house" homes over the next five to seven years, the first two in Henrietta. Each would be home to just 10 elders and staffed by employees who have the combined roles

of caregiver, activity coordinator and housekeeper.

Once people move out to the new homes, St. John's plans to convert its existing 475-bed nursing home on Highland Avenue into 20-some multi-story green house homes.

Rochester Presbyterian Home built a cluster of four 12-bed assisted living homes in Chili for people with dementia. Unity Health System is replacing its nursing home with four duplex-style, one-story "cottages." Kirkhaven wants to build 12-bedroom cottages to replace its building. □

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