

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

The Tony Day Family Medical Clinic

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

Health care services near the Town of Carnduff took a hit in 2009, when Dr. Prescott passed away after more than 30 years of practice. He had operated his own clinic out of his residence, leaving the town without an available clinic. This meant two doctors in Oxbow had to serve residents from the Manitoba border west to Frobisher, and from the North Dakota border north to Carlyle. Local councils felt that building a new medical clinic in a prime location would attract physicians and other health professionals to the area.

THE PROCESS

The councils of the Town of Carnduff and RM of Mount Pleasant #2 worked cooperatively to hire an architect to design a building that would provide room for a medical clinic, a dentist, and public health practitioners. At the same time, Border-Line Housing Co., a municipally owned and operated senior housing facility, decided to add on an additional 10 suites. With joint consultation councils decided that the front of the new addition to this senior housing complex would be a prime location for the medical clinic. Plans were drawn up with the clinic attached to the senior housing, linking all areas together and giving residents and staff inside access to the clinic.

Funding was put in place by both municipalities with no government funding. Fundraising was local and is still ongoing. Construction began in 2009. The original contract was with an American company to construct a module building. After many problems with this company they cancelled the contract and contracted with the subcontractor to stick build the clinic based on the original plans. The building was finally completed in December of 2011.

There is now an optometrist who provides services, and dispenses glasses and contact lenses. To date there is no dentist, but with the surprise of getting the optometrist that side worked out wonderfully. Public health nurses hold clinics; mental health services rent space occasionally, as has a hearing clinic.

They have signed a contract with a doctor who is currently going through the Saskatchewan International Physician Practicum Assessment program. He will be able to begin practise later this year, when he successfully completes this program. He will be joining the practice of the two local doctors in Oxbow and running the clinic in Carnduff. They are working with the Sun Country Health District to provide other services here as well.

The RM administrator currently looks after all the income and expenses of the clinic. The staff of both municipalities has worked jointly to see this project through and ensure its future success.

THE RESULTS

This project has had a positive effect on the community. Residents are able to visit an optometrist without having to drive a long distance. Public health nurses provide local care to the expanding demographic of young families. Having a doctor practicing in the area will have a huge impact on the physician shortage. It will take pressure of the local doctors and patients won't have to wait a month or more to see a doctor.

The group faced a lot of challenges with the construction of the building and the original contractor. Once past those humps and with a new contractor the project went much smoother. Another major challenge is getting professionals to come to the area and set up their practice. They lost the dentist due to the delays with construction, but gained an optometrist. Physician recruitment is a problem throughout the province; with the help and support of the existing physicians and surrounding municipalities, they have provided the community with a much-needed service.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Ensure your architect and contractors are reputable and get references. Don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions and get all the answers in writing.