

Province announces new long-term care beds for Barry's Bay

By Sarah Sobanski

Valley Manor Nursing Home has been awarded six new long-term care beds by the province. Its CEO says they'll be put to good use once the Manor has moved to its new location.

The beds are a part of Ontario's four-year plan to increase access to long-term care by 5,000 beds.

CEO for the Manor Trisha Sammon said any extra beds the Manor can get are "great."

"What we're doing is we're looking to redevelop and having these six extra beds will enable us to have three home areas within the actual facility itself," she said noting the Manor's goal to move to a new facility by late 2020.

Sammon said the Manor is 40 years old and was built for residents who were "more mobile and required less care."

"With the change of the health care landscape now most people are staying in their homes longer. By the time they come to Valley Manor they're at a much more difficult level of care and our current home just can't accommodate that level of care."

Last year the Manor purchased the Sherwood Public School property beside the St. Francis Memorial Hospital in hopes of becoming part of a central health care hub in Barry's Bay.

"This is part of our redevelopment journey by applying for these six extra licenses," she said. "It seems to be the trend, to the one-stop-shop health stops. That's where the health care landscape is moving... having everything in one area which is much better for the community, which is much better for the residents and patients... It saves money for the health-care system."

According to its press release, the province wants 30,000 additional beds available come 2028 "a part of its Aging with Confidence: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors. It's also "redeveloping" 30,000 beds in 300 homes for a total of 60,000.

"Our government is committed to supporting Ontario residents who rely on long-term care homes for their ongoing health and personal care needs. By adding six new long-care beds to the redevelopment of Valley Manor Nursing Home in Barry's Bay, we are helping more seniors access the care they need in their community, close to family and friends," Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Dr. Helena Jaczek said in the release.

"The province has nearly doubled its annual funding for long-term care since 2003, from \$2.1 billion to \$4.14 billion," the press release stated.