



Camp Health Center Design Principals

Camp Health Centers have unique needs. At present, their construction is not governed by the regulations that impact hospitals and clinics. However, the needs are unique enough that attending to them during the planning phase can save time and dollars while increasing satisfaction with the result. At present, there is no available resource that succinctly describes these needs; consequently, the following has been prepared as a guide. Information is based on ACA standards, health department recommendations, OSHA requirements, and input from experts who have renovated or built their own health centers.

Individuals who have managed a renovation or building project, shared that the most important step is **planning**. Give the most time to planning the space and visiting other camp health centers for ideas. Consider having a wish list of ideas before sitting down with architects and planners as they will be dependent on your vision for the new structure.

Location

The objective is to be as accessible as possible. Central camp location is appropriate but in an area that can also provide quiet and ground-level access for both vehicles and people. Avoid locating a Health Center far from its needed supports such as the camp's administrative office, transportation/vehicle access (EMS), and food service.

Space Allocation

An important consideration of space allocation is **flow** through the health center. Consider the way people may enter and exit the center to prevent space confusion, heavy traffic, and congestion in work areas. At minimum, space is needed for (a) a waiting area, (b) an office and treatment area, (c) at least one accessible bathroom with toilet, sink and shower/tub, (d) an admit area with one bed per 50 staff and campers, (e) an isolation room, (f) an exam room, (g) small kitchen area allowing staff to make and store "sick people" food, and (h) a separate nurse's residence & bathroom. The Health Center should be designed to:

- Assure privacy for the person being treated, both visual and listening privacy;
- Provide space for trauma care;
- Restrict incoming traffic to the waiting area;
- Assure security of records and medication as well as provide adequate storage space for these items. Medications must be kept in locked location and camper files must be secured.
- Support communication tools (phone, fax, computer, internet, door bells, baby monitors) and other office tasks while also protecting security, privacy & confidentiality.
- Enable multiple uses of space whenever possible (e.g. isolation room could be exam room as well as part of male-female separation).
- Adequate counter tops for medication preparation and places for documenting are important.
- Support non-camp program needs at the camp facility (e.g., rental group use).

Waiting Area

This may be as simple as a bench placed at the entry to the Health Center or an actual "waiting room." Regardless, protection from weather is important as well as quick access to the bathroom (some campers can't wait!) and have ready access to drinking water. Consider installing water bottle station(s) where individuals could refill while there.

Office & Treatment Area (a multi-purpose area)

This area contains a desk, phone, refrigeration, treatment area for injury and illness (including a scrub sink), medication center, and storage space (cabinets and closet). It serves as the area of first contact with clients and, therefore, should be located just past the entry to the health services. It needs good lighting (think of drawing medication into a syringe and examining a wound or rash), cross ventilation, a vinyl floor (easy to clean), adequate wiring for technology, and ready access to the bathroom. There should be an adequate number of hand washing stations throughout the health center.

Consider the Health Center's future technology needs. Having robust – and reliable – internet access with adequate bandwidth is important. This will become more important as telemedicine options develop along with the portable individual health record (i.e., a record accessible to various providers via the owner's permission).

Bathroom

This area needs enough space between toilet, sink and shower/tub so both the nurse and client can move effectively. Storage shelves, good lighting, and ventilation are crucial. Consider a bench for wound washes and mounting a hand-held shower head to the tub unit (tubs are used for various soaks). Provide an adequate supply of hot water. An easy-to-clean vinyl floor is required. If possible, separate the bathroom(s) used for Health Center clients from the one for the nurse's personal use. This also helps infection control.

Exam and Observation Room(s)

The purpose of this area is to provide enough beds for sick and/or injured people. Actual size is a function of the camp population in that one bed per 50 people (staff & campers) should be available. The exam area needs access to a bathroom and should be located to provide privacy and quiet. Consider having a window in the door(s) of the observation rooms allowing the nurse to see the individuals without having to open the door (decrease noise and increase rest). Consequently, tucking it back from the Health Center's general traffic flow is important. Separation between men and women must be possible. Consider two rooms. One room might have one bed and be used for exam, isolation, and/or men-women separation. The second room would contain the remaining beds, each with a draw curtain or some other means of separation. In combination, the two rooms meet a variety of needs. The entire area must be well ventilated and have good lighting over each bed. Some climate control should be available (e.g., fans or air conditioning) and the floor should be easy to clean (vinyl). Avoid using bunk beds when possible. It's hard to move quickly from the top bunk when one has to throw up or has a leg injury and it's tough for a nurse to assess people sleeping in bunk beds. Finally, consider how the nurse will hear people in these rooms. Strategies such as a baby monitor allows the nurse to adequately hear what's going on in the admit rooms (including while the nurse may be sleeping at night). At other times an intercom system may be more appropriate.

Nurse's Room

This is a private living quarters. While part of the Health Center, it should be away from major traffic flow and have a lockable door. The room contains a bed, closet, shelving, desk and bathroom (toilet, sink, shower). Cross-ventilation, adequate lighting, and electrical/technology/phone outlets are assumed. This area could be carpeted.

Additional Notes

- The Health Center's entrance needs an exterior light for night use. In addition, a door-bell would help wake the nurse at night (put the ringer in the nurse's room).
- The entrance must also be accessible; consider ramping the area (even if the camp population isn't "special").
- Attend to lighting; make it possible to observe people and their condition even at night. Bedside lighting is helpful when trying to assess individuals at night.
- Cross-ventilation is required. This can be accomplished with windows and fans but consider air conditioning if heat and humidity is part of the camp's profile.
- The nurse's personal bathroom is part of the infection control process. Minimize the potential of exposing the nurse to contamination – in other words, the nurse getting sick -- by providing him/her with a his/her own bathroom.
- Make the doors wider for access with wheelchairs – even if not serving a special needs population. Consider ADA guidelines.
- It is helpful to have an office space and/or private meeting space. In this space one camp make phone calls, respond to emails, coach and mentor staff, and manage health operations.
- Make the Health Center inviting – Add a porch or windows or a pleasant place to sit and rest and refill water bottles.
- Consider having an area to serve individuals with mental, emotional, and social health needs. This area needs to be a quiet space with a high level of privacy.
- Consider building as much space as the budget allows for growth and ease of operations.
- Consider an open floor plan that allows for communication, visible ease, and better ventilation.

*Much Appreciation to the individuals who have given of their time, talent, and energy to bring this document together:
Jane Sanborn, Randy Murr, John Quinlivan, Stacy Dorian, Linda Erceg, and Mary Marugg.*