

Peterson AFB will have great smiles walking around

By the end of the calendar year, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, will have some great smiles walking around the installation thanks to the new dental clinic being built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District. The new dental clinic will replace the temporary clinic the base has been using for the last few years and also offers an upgrade to the technology currently in use.

The new \$16 million facility is approximately 16,000 square feet, contains 19 dental treatment rooms, as well as a designated area to perform oral surgery. Within the building there is also a small lab to help service all the people located on Peterson AFB. More square footage enables the clinic to use in-lab computer-assisted design technology to expedite the creation of dental prostheses allowing for a quicker return-to-duty for the modern warfighter.

The new clinic could not be completed at a better time. In the 2016 fiscal year, the temporary clinic saw an approximate total of 11,000 patients. With three months left in the 2017 fiscal year, the clinic had treated 10,850 clients, just 250 shy of last year's total. In addition to treating service members in the area, the clinic also provides services to retirees, contractors and foreign military members stationed on local bases.

Dental Clinic Commander, Col. Kevin Stanger, says that the temporary clinic is treating more than 80 people a day and that number is growing. The new clinic is much larger and offers more space for the dental staff to perform their duties, including the use of natural lighting.

“All of the dental facility windows, where patients will be treated, face the sun, which is important, to get natural lighting which will enhance our aesthetics when we treat our patients... which is the best to use,” Stranger said.

He added that natural lighting also allows more effective dental prostheses fabrication because the dental assistants are better able to match the color of customer’s teeth.

The new facility design allows for more efficient economy-of-motion between the providers, staff and patients allowing for more beneficial patient care. Each of the 19 dental treatment rooms are ambidextrously designed to allow right and left hand providers to deliver unhindered care. Previously, a left-handed dentist would only be able to operate in a treatment room designed for the left-handed, inhibiting or potentially postponing dental care.

Additionally, the new dental clinic will be gold-level LEED certified. To earn a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification, a building is scored on green building design and construction in five basic categories: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. The more points earned the higher the level of certification.

In support of the LEED certification, “The building is completely heated and cooled by geothermal,” said Chip Scharff, project engineer, USACE Omaha District. “There is a geothermal well field which is 27 wells, which are each 400 feet deep, and the water that will circulate out of those wells is about a constant 60 degrees, which can be used for cooling and heating.”

There are additional LEED items that will ensure the new clinic is gold certified.

Another benefit of the new clinic is the design of a central instrument processing center. The CIPC sterilizes equipment for use in medical procedures to minimize cross-contamination. The facility, currently located in the temporary clinic, sterilizes equipment for the dental clinic but also sterilizes equipment for the hospital located on base as well as those bases located in the local area: Schriever AFB, Fort Carson, and the Air Force Academy.

The new clinic's CIPC has top-of-the-line equipment and removes a layer of potential human error. Medical equipment can only be used in the clean room after it passes through the CIPC sterilization equipment. In the temporary facility, an error can occur if a clinic member were to move equipment to the clean room prior to sterilization.

As the Omaha District nears completion of the new clinic, dental appointments should not be effected. According to Scharff, the facility is considered a turn-key operation to include movement from the temporary facility to the new building. When the Omaha District turns the building over to Stanger and the dental clinic, dental procedures should proceed with zero-to-minimal interruptions.

"After the staff returns Monday morning after leaving on Friday afternoon, they will be able to pick up operations in the new facility and conduct operations as normal," Scharff said.

After the move to the new clinic, the Omaha District will demolish the temporary clinic and complete all landscaping, resulting in a clinic with an excellent view of Pikes Peak and the Rocky Mountains.



The final touches are being put on a new dental clinic on Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, is building the for the 21st Space Wing, Dental Detachment, to provide dental readiness for not just Airmen located in the area but for all military members from the greater Colorado Springs area. (Photo by Harry Weddington, USACE Photographer)



Peterson Air Base's new dental clinic should be completed and operational by the end of the calendar year. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working with the Peterson Dental staff to ensure that all mission requirements are met with the new facility. (Photo by Harry Weddington, USACE Photographer)