



# NHHS...in the news...

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## Hospital approves bond proposal

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NEWPORT – Voters in Pend Oreille Hospital District No. 1 will be asked this November to approve up to a \$10 million bond to construct a new long term care facility. The board of directors that oversee Newport Hospital and Health Services approved putting the measure on the ballot at their meeting Thursday, June 25.

The measure will be for a \$10 million, 25-year bond, but CEO Tom Wilbur said he is expecting actual numbers to be \$9.5 million and 20 years.

The district will be offering compensation for approval of the bond, if law allows. Wilbur said residents' tax assessments that show how much they pay toward the bond can be used to offset health care bills at NHHS, including co-pays, labs and other bills. He said the district has done this in the past. As of

last week, he was checking with the state to make sure the compensation is still allowable.

"It all comes down to commitment to the service line," Wilbur said.

If approved, construction on the facility would begin in 2018. It will be constructed just west of River Mountain Village, the district's assisted living facility located on the corner of Second and Spokane streets.

The facility will at first have capacity for 54 beds with ancillary space that can be transitioned into more residential space for a total of 72 beds.

Both RMV and the current long-term care facilities are full, according to Michele Page, RN, Director of Residential Care.

The facility will be for chronically frail residents, who need assistance with

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## **BOND:** LTC will remain, regardless

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every day tasks. It will be designed like River Mountain Village, a home-like atmosphere with the assumption that residents will live there permanently.

If a resident needs more extended care, such as skilled nursing or social workers, those services will be brought in on an as-needed basis, rather than part of the full-time staff. This will help save money.

District officials explain that the typical taxpayer would re-coup the tax assessment within two months, if they or a family member is placed in the new facility.

Wilbur explained that the cost of private care in Spokane is about \$8,000 a month. Assisted living care, such as will be offered at Newport, is about \$4,000 a month. Paying the average \$200 a year for 20 years

on the bond would be recouped in the first month at those rates.

The district agrees on the commitment to the service line of long-term care.

"We are by no means saying we're going to close LTC if it doesn't pass," said Jenny Smith, Marketing and Foundation Director of NHHS.

The current LTC facility is located next to Newport Hospital, where a new clinic is being constructed, starting later this summer, paid for with a loan and district reserves. The LTC could be transitioned into office space, allowing the district to consolidate offices that are now housed throughout the neighborhood, such as accounting and administration.

The current facility was constructed in a more institutionalized fashion, with shared bathrooms and hospital-like living quarters.