



## Therapy and Short-Term Stay trends within the industry

Outpatient and inpatient short-term rehabilitation facilities located in skilled care facilities are filling the need when individuals no longer require acute care hospital care.



## Therapy and Short-Term Stay

If the individual does not have the ability or resources at home or just needs periodic rehab services, these facilities assist each patient reach their maximum potential in recovery. Each facility provides trained medical personnel to provide services and programs for rehabilitation in post surgical conditions, cardiac recovery, orthopedic recovery and stroke/neurological rehab.

### **Satisfying Patient Need**

A short-term rehab patient usually provides the highest reimbursement rate. For a facility, satisfying the needs of these patients is essential for a facility to develop a strong reputation in the community. The benefit will be a constant source of admissions and census.

Today, more patients tend to lead active lifestyles and have much higher demands for not only clinical excellence, but also facility aesthetics. No longer can long-term care providers find the first available bed within their facility. This normally results in short-term rehab patients mixing with traditional long-term care residents. The highest satisfaction occurs when a dedicated wing, area or building is provided, preferably close to the rehabilitation gym.

### **Amenities, Interior Finishes and Education**

What are the amenities that will achieve the high satisfaction among patients? Lessons learned from the hospitality industry are our first clue to successful approaches. Free Wi-Fi, restaurant style dining, flat screen TVs, mini bar and in-room refrigerators. We can't overlook the obvious, however: private rooms with full bathrooms, cell phone coverage using a Distributed Antenna System (DAS) and 24/7 access by friends and family.

Material finishes within a short-term rehab wing can also make a difference. Again, hospitality and home-like is the theme

that should resonate, not clinical and sterile. A resort or spa appearance is desirable. The use of actual wood, granite and fabric provide many opportunities, while still maintaining infection control protocols of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Wellness after discharge is an important education subject in most rehabilitation facilities. Providing a demonstration kitchen is helpful to discuss dietary changes with patients that have heart conditions. A space for aerobics and/or gym equipment to promote a life-long exercise program can be provided.

### **The Importance of Creating Access**

Separate access to the short-term stay unit and therapy rooms is essential. Patients may not be elderly or want to feel old by commingling with the geriatric population. Along with separate entrances, separate access to outdoor spaces is a must. While the Midwest climate is at times inhospitable, it can still be beautiful, and access physically and visually to outdoor spaces will enhance the patient experience. It is not a bad thing to carry their rehab program to the outdoors during nice weather conditions. Walking paths with ramps and steps along with elevated planting areas and exercise stations will prevent the rehab regime from becoming dull.

If a skilled care facility pays close attention to the overall needs and satisfaction of the individuals it serves, a locally sought after rehabilitation center and short-stay unit can be a viable profit center.



Kim Hassell, AIA  
800.208.7078  
[khassell@prarch.com](mailto:khassell@prarch.com)  
[www.prarch.com](http://www.prarch.com)

Kim is a partner of the firm and highly involved in PRA's long-term care studio. If you would like to learn more about the transformational changes occurring in long-term care facility planning and design, please contact Kim.