

Family Home Health Agency's relocation could help revive Bellevue area

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Family Home Health Agency, Inc., a not-for-profit that specializes in providing home health services for homebound patients, is moving into a newly renovated 12,000-square foot, four-story office on Minna Place, between Lamar, Bellevue and I-240. The project had a budget of about \$3 million and was built by local contractor [Bricks, Inc.](#)

Founded in 1996, Family Home Health Agency has grown from a staff of two to 134 employees, including nurses and administrative staff. It currently serves 370 patients.

O.C. Pleasant, chairman of the agency's board of directors, says the agency has more than outgrown its current space on Mississippi Boulevard.

"If we continue to grow, it'll be too small for us," Pleasant says.

Already anticipating that growth, the agency has acquired another building near the new headquarters that will be renovated as needed.

The move into the new Minna Place facility served as a type of urban renewal project for [Self Tucker Architects](#), Inc., which designed the renovations for the new facility. Jim Murray, associate principal with Self Tucker and the project's lead architect, says the building had to be gutted to its structural core.

The firm razed two abandoned houses across the street from the building that

are now serving as parking space for the agency. The project includes new lighting and an outdoor recreational area for employees on the site. Murray says one of the unfinished aspects of the project is fixing the deteriorated curbs and gutters leading from I-240 to the property.

"That is beyond a private individual, but we replaced the fencing near the interstate," Murray says. "We're trying to get help on getting the public portion redone because it's a no-man's land right now."

The original building was built in 1968; the I-240 Interstate system was built around it, so a number of older streets leading to the building were just covered. Because of that, Murray says as trenching was done on the land surrounding the building, it wasn't unusual to encounter up to 15 layers of asphalt and concrete that had to be removed.

The project was designed with different sustainable aspects, including a heating and cooling system that is controlled through a master monitoring system that only heats and cools occupied rooms. High-efficiency lighting fixtures are controlled through motion detectors.

Pleasant says the project was funded by Family Home Health Agency. He says it was never an option for the agency to move from the inner city to the suburbs.

"We always wanted to relocate in the city and be in an area where we could see some appreciation in the value of a property and make a contribution to the redevelopment of the city," Pleasant says.

Jimmie Tucker, a principal with Self Tucker, says the project, along with development going on near University Place, is slowly knitting the surrounding community together after many years of distress.

"With the development going on to the north of the building at Lamar and a stable residential community to the south of it, this could be a very good location in a few years," Tucker says.