

Recommendations for the Establishment of New Lifestyle Centers*

The health care systems today are in crisis. Preventive medicine is receiving more attention and lifestyle reform is becoming increasingly popular. On the other hand there is a boom of mystical medicine currents causing confusion among people and health professionals as well. In this critical situation the SDA church is called to establish small institutions all over the world to treat the sick, teach them a healthy lifestyle and lead them to the true saviour of body, mind and soul. The following general guidelines shall assist particularly self-supporting organizations in this endeavor.

How should these institutions look like and how should they function?

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."
Luke 9:1,2

"Seventh-day Adventists are to be represented to the world by the advanced principles of health reform which God has given us. Still greater truths are unfolding for this people as we draw near the close of time, and God designs that we shall everywhere establish institutions where those who are in darkness in regards to needs of the human organism may be educated, that they in their turn may lead others into light of health reform."

Medical Ministry, p. 187

"Our sanitariums are one of the most successful means of reaching all classes of people. Christ is no longer in this world in person, to go through our cities and towns and villages healing the sick. He has commissioned us to carry forward the medical missionary work that He began, and in this work we are to do our very best. Institutions for the care of the sick are to be established, where men and women may be placed under the care of God-fearing medical missionaries and be treated without drugs. To these institutions will come those who have brought disease on themselves by improper habits of eating and drinking. These are to be taught the principles of healthful living. They are to be taught the value of self-denial and self-restraint. They are to be provided with a simple, wholesome, palatable diet and are to be cared for by wise physicians and nurses."

Counsels on Health, p. 212

"In various places, properties are to be purchased to be used for sanitarium purposes. Our people should be looking for opportunities to purchase properties away from the cities, on which are buildings already erected and orchards already in bearing."
Id., p. 227

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"In all our medical institutions, patients should be systematically and carefully instructed how to prevent disease by a wise course of action. Through lectures and the consistent practice of the principles of healthful living on the part of consecrated physicians and nurses, the blinded understanding of many will be opened, and truths never before thought will be fastened on the mind." Id., p. 470

"We should ever remember that the object of the medical missionary work is to point sinsick men and women to the Man of Calvary, who taketh away the sin of the world."

Ministry of Healing, p. 144

The following steps shall help to start such centers:

1. Establish a group of interested people in this project:
 - 1 or 2 physicians
 - 3 or 4 nurses
 - physiotherapist
 - cook
 - expert in computer desktop publishing
 - maintenance men
 - housekeeper
 - gardener
 - receptionist
 - other volunteers
2. Meet regularly (about once a month) to pray and to study the inspired counsels regarding small sanitariums. Recommended books are:
 - *Ministry of Healing*, E. G. White
 - *Counsels on Health*, E. G. White
 - *Medical Ministry*, E. G. White
 - *Selected Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation for a Rural Conditioning Center*, Compilation of E. G. White writings by Jim Henson
 - *GUIDELINES... For Seventh-day Adventist Better Living Centers*, General Conference, Dept. of Health, 1977
3. Assign a meaningful name to the project.
 - Such terms as "CENTER", "HEALTH", "INSTITUTE", and alike are well accepted and convey the idea of professionalism. The term "LIFESTYLE" may also be acceptable.
 - Terms as "ADVENTIST", "NATURIST", "HOLISTIC" and alike are not recommended to protect the church and to avoid confusion with mystical medicine.

It is convenient to work in harmony with an international network of similar institutions. The NEWSTART®-Program conforms with these criteria but there are established requirements for the use of this protected name. (For more details ask the EUD Health Department.)

4. Search for an adequate location which complies with the following criteria:
 - calm location outside of large cities with walking possibilities in the surroundings
 - enough room for gardening
 - enough room for future growth of the institution
 - easy access to public transportation and to large cities

It may be advantageous to use existing facilities, if available, in order to avoid large initial investments.

The facilities must not be luxurious but clean and homey, not "hospital"-like. Remember that educated people are expected. The whole atmosphere must be of friendliness, mutual respect and demonstrate a genuine interest in the wellbeing of the guests.

Important rule: Start small and increase gradually according to the demands and available resources. The advantages of starting small are that any mistakes will not cause great problems and that necessary modifications and adjustments (which are natural in any new project) are easier to realize.

5. Required initial facilities:
 - medical office(s) and examining rooms
 - large living room for social gatherings and health lectures
 - physiotherapy room(s) - men's and women's separate where feasible
 - gymnastic room for indoor exercise
 - kitchen and teaching kitchen
 - individual and double bed rooms, preferably with integrated restrooms and shower
 - rooms for other purposes: administration, publishing, etc.
 - sufficient store rooms
6. Desirable medical and teaching equipment:
 - electrocardiograph
 - treadmill
 - scale for medical office
 - simple equipment for determination of blood cholesterol and blood sugar
 - equipment for physiotherapy
 - good computer equipment with CD-ROM and color printer
 - photocopy machine
 - video with recorder for showing films
 - slide projector
 - overhead projector
 - etc.
7. Not necessary equipment:
 - general laboratory and x-ray

It is necessary, however, to contract the services of a nearby laboratory to perform all initial and final lab tests of the patients. It is also of good sense to cultivate good relations with nearby clinics for possible emergencies that may occur incidentally.

8. Publication of a regular newsletter.

- At the beginning it may be enough to publish it in black & white on simple paper every three months to inform the interested people about the progress of the project.
- When the project is functioning, the frequency of publication may be increased and the printing quality improved. It will then also serve to maintain contact with former patients.

Suggested contents:

- continual information about the progress of the project
- specific project needs
- one or two articles on health
- testimonies of satisfied patients
- schedule of programs and special events
- advertising of new features or products (including of the Health Food Company)
- etc.

9. Publicity.

Experience shows that the most effective publicity is the mouth to mouth propaganda by satisfied patients. Other recommended means for publicity are:

- Writing of health articles in denominational and non-denominational popular health periodicals with reference to the project.
- Repeated ads in denominational and non-denominational popular health journals.
- Lectures on health in churches and public conferences. At these occasions promotional color pamphlets may be distributed containing information about the program, address, pictures, and an additional sheet with the program schedules.
- SDA physicians may do well by referring their patients who may benefit from a lifestyle change

10. Establishment of a legal entity.

Whenever the law permits, a non-profit corporation should be established for income tax advantages and to secure public donations. Fundraising among the Adventist churches for private enterprises should be avoided.

For "self-supporting" institutions it is recommended to include in the Directory Board the local Conference's or Union's Health Department Director and/or other church leader who identifies himself with and supports the project. The number of board members should be kept small at first, limiting to those persons who actively support or work in the project.

In all cases it is important to work always in harmony with the church's philosophy and objectives, remembering that the medical-missionary work is a part of the gospel.

"Christ cooperates with those who engage in medical missionary work. Men and women who unselfishly do what they can to establish sanitariums and treatment rooms in many lands will be richly rewarded." Medical Ministry, p. 331

"We shall see the medical missionary work broadening and deepening at every point of its progress, because of the inflowing of hundreds and thousands of streams, until the whole earth is covered as the waters cover the sea." Id., p. 317

