

Shared Space Model Continues to Thrive in Downtown Dunlap

Four years after purchasing a vacant medical facility on Main Street, the Dunlap Community Development Corporation's shared space model continues to serve as a successful example of rural community development.

In 2022, DCDC purchased the 4,000-square-foot brick building at 612 Iowa Ave., formerly occupied by Burgess Family Clinic and Pharmacy. What was once an empty facility has since been transformed into a fully occupied hub for health, wellness and professional services, bringing together multiple independent providers under one roof.

Today, the building houses Family Connections mental health services, Horizon Physical Therapy, Community Pharmacy, Hair by Megan Hanigan, DCDC and Lambert Family Chiropractic. All tenant spaces are occupied, and the facility remains fully leased.

"In the spring of 2022, DCDC took ownership of the facility on Main Street that was formerly occupied by a Burgess Clinic and Pharmacy," said Jill Schaben, executive director of DCDC. "It was the Board's vision to return pharmacy services to town and fill the remainder of the space with wellness services."

The first tenant to establish services in the building was Family Connections, which opened satellite mental health therapy services in Dunlap in December 2022. In February 2023, DCDC announced that Horizon Physical Therapy would lease space in the facility, providing local access to rehabilitation services. Community Pharmacy celebrated its grand opening in July 2023, restoring pharmacy services to the community, and Lambert Family Chiropractic joined the shared space later that year.

The concept was designed to help attract and retain services that might otherwise be difficult to sustain independently in a small rural community. By sharing a building, tenants benefit from reduced overhead costs, increased visibility and proximity to complementary services.

"DCDC's shared space plays a vital role in the success of Community Pharmacy," said Steven Donnelly, vice president of operations for OneroRx. "As Iowa's leading rural pharmacy provider, we see firsthand how DCDC's community focus and strong partnerships create positive results for everyone involved."

"One of the biggest benefits of the shared space is being surrounded by other professionals who are committed to serving the community," said Ben Deutchman of Horizon Physical Therapy. "We may offer different services, but we're all working toward the same goal of improving the health and well-being of the people we serve."

For residents, the shared space has created a convenient destination where multiple health and wellness services can be accessed in one location.

"Just like chiropractic care, many of the services in this building benefit everyone from infants to grandparents," said Dr. Madilyn Blunk of Lambert Family Chiropractic. "I am excited to be able to support the families in this community, alongside the other professionals in the building."

Blunk said the collaborative atmosphere benefits both businesses and the community.

"Bringing professionals together in a shared office space creates an environment where businesses can support each other while also making services more accessible for

the community," she said. "It's really about building connections and making it easier for people to find the care and resources they need."

She added that the model is particularly well-suited for a small town like Dunlap.

"It's a unique setup that really fits a small community," Blunk said. "Sharing a space with professionals from different backgrounds allows us to connect with other professionals, support one another's businesses and create a welcoming place for the community to come."

As the facility enters its fourth year under DCDC ownership, community leaders point to the building as one of the organization's most successful recent economic development projects. The once-vacant facility is now fully occupied, providing essential services, supporting local jobs and serving as a visible example of how collaboration can help rural communities thrive.

The success of the shared space has reinforced DCDC's mission of strengthening Dunlap through strategic investments, partnerships and projects that enhance quality of life for residents while supporting long-term community growth.

