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**Better patient care through expansion**

By Spc. Todd Goodman  
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Landstuhl, Germany – Landstuhl Regional Medical Center's ongoing "facelift" continues with the construction of two new clinics.

Ground recently was broken on a Vaccination Health Clinic and an existing hospital wing was renovated in an effort to move the Audiology and Speech Clinic back inside the hospital.

Construction for a 250 square meter Vaccination Health Clinic began July 15. The Department of Defense directed project should be completed by Dec. 23, at a cost of more than \$500,000. Located above the helipad, next to Bldg. 3740, the clinic will give LRMC a centrally located facility to provide immunizations to service members.

Finding a place to move the Audiology Clinic has been in the works for several years, said Rolf Burger, an architect for LRMC Facilities Management. That place was found in Bldg. 3766, and although the wing wasn't rebuilt from the ground up, it was quite an undertaking – with a cost of \$1.4 million.

"Construction began in August of last year," said Burger. "We took out 80 percent of the walls and completely refurbished the floors. We put in new bathrooms, a speech lab and sound-proof booths. The booths alone cost \$300,000."

The new clinic also will end up saving LRMC some money.

"It's going to save thousands of dollars by not having to call the German Red Cross each time a litter patient needs to be wheeled to us at Bldg. 3700," said Maj. Mark Little, chief of the Audiology and Speech Clinic. "It also will help patients be seen quicker."

Although the renovation is complete, moving the Audiology Clinic still could be months away.

First, the new furniture is not yet available. Existing furniture cannot be used in the new clinic because it doesn't meet the standards of the Joint Commission Hospital Accrediting Organization. Predominantly cloth chairs and sofas cannot easily or thoroughly be cleaned, said Little. The new wing won't have any of those problems with which to deal.

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Secondly, is the matter of air conditioning. If funds for air conditioning materialize, the new clinic would be among the first wings to have it. That takes a bit of time to install, and after installation, patients from various wards would be moved temporarily to the clinic while air condition is installed on the patient wards.

“There are plans for us to get \$10 million to air condition the entire hospital, but we are not exactly sure when we will get it,” said Burger. “We will not leave the clinic empty for a year, though.”

“The new furniture is really the driving force,” said Dennis McAvoy, a project manager with LRMC Facilities Management. “Once that is in place, we’ll see where we stand with the air conditioning.”