



**Webinar #1:
Creating Home: The Essential Elements of Small Houses**

Questions & Answers

1. Question: Are there evidence-based research results available comparing clinical outcomes in Green House [homes]¹ and households?

Answer: There is currently no comparative research available related to comparative clinical outcomes at this time, primarily because both models are still very young. There were only 4 or 5 skilled nursing households in 1998 and the first Green House[®] small homes were opened in 2003. We do know that outcomes improve in both models because there is strong anecdotal and some early research evidence for this. Additional research projects are currently underway and we welcome researchers to undertake this and many other research questions. For more information on what we know currently about each model, please see:

- “Household Model’s Impact on Quality of Care Impresses” by Marilyn Oelfke, Culture Change Now, Special Household Edition, 2008 (\$15, www.culturechangenow.com)
- “Better Than We Ever Dreamed” by Linda Bump Culture Change Now, Vol. 1, 2001 (Reprint \$12, www.culturechangenow.com).
- Resident Outcomes in Small-House Nursing Homes: A Longitudinal Evaluation of the Initial Green House Program, Kane, R.A., Lum, T. Y., Cutler, L. J., Degenholz, H.B., & Yu, Tzy-Chyi (2007). Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 55 (6) :832–839, (PDF available without charge at www.thegreenhouseproject.org)

2. Question: Do you use any criteria for discharging residents, e.g., a resident who is violent toward other residents?

Answer: Small homes are typically licensed as skilled nursing homes and provide all the skilled and personal care services required under that licensing category. Green House homes are committed to the concept of aging-in-place. So, in addition to providing the required nursing home care, The Green House project asks our

¹ THE GREEN HOUSE[®] is a registered service mark and may only be used by organizations holding a valid sub-license from NCB Capital Impact.

partners operating Green House homes to provide the highest level of care available on their campus in their Green House homes. The Green House Project will not partner with organizations that want to use The Green House model as a “light” care model of nursing or pre-nursing home care.

In operating Green House homes, there are residents requiring the highest levels of skilled nursing care. A Green House project in development plans to provide even higher levels of care in their Green House homes than they can currently in their traditional nursing home, including ventilator care. As a result, the discharge criteria in Green House homes are few and far between. With that said, as in more traditional nursing homes, residents must be discharged if they have a specialized or particular need that the nursing home is not able to meet appropriately and safely.

3. Question: Do you have examples of a traditional nursing home implementing the small house concept, including staff re-organization?

Answer: Most organizations implementing small homes and the household model start as traditional nursing home organizations. For examples of both, please see the directory in Culture Change Now, Special Household Edition, 2008, pp. 28 – 31. For a listing of organizations that have or are implementing Green House homes, please see The Green House Project’s “Projects” page at www.thegreenhouseproject.org. Re-organization issues have been detailed in many Action Pact and Green House Project articles, some found on the “Featured Stories” and “Free Downloads” pages of www.culturechangenow.com and on the “In The News” and “Research” pages at www.thegreenhouseproject.org. Other re-organization issues are detailed in Culture Change Now, Vol. 4 magazine, *The Organizational Redesign Phase of Culture Change* (\$15), at www.culturechangenow.com)

4. Question: What are Shahbazim?

Answer: Shahbazim are the direct care staff working in the Green House homes (Shahbaz is the singular of Shahbazim). Shahbazim are certified nursing assistants that receive an additional 120 hours of Green House Project training to:

- explore and embrace the core principles and practices of the Green House model
- support their work as a care partner in a self-directed care model
- develop and practice management and communication skills necessary to work in self-managed work teams
- learn policies and procedures specific to Green House home operations
- develop care, management, cooking, housekeeping, and laundry skills necessary to function as a universal worker

For more information on the concept and role of a Shahbaz, please visit www.thegreenhouseproject.org.

5. Question: Do the small houses admit residents with pets, and if so, have architectural features been designed to accommodate them?

Answer: Some small houses and households allow pets and others do not. While this is a decision that each organization ultimately makes for itself, both the household and small house models encourage honoring residents' individual preferences, especially when it involves something that can have profound positive impacts on that resident's quality of life. Where pets live in Green House homes or households, just as in our own homes, no special architectural features are required.

6. Question: What are the advantages of the Green House over the household model?

Answer: The Green House, small house, and household models share the common goals and principles enumerated in the presentation. They represent different approaches to operationalizing core concepts. None are better or worse than the other in concept and each can deliver exceptional results when implemented with commitment and skill. All can also fail badly without appropriate planning, training, and commitment to each of the core principles.

The different models offer varying solutions to meet an organization's particular situation. If an organization needs to rebuild their nursing home from the ground up, Green House homes may be a good solution. If an organization cannot replace their current building, households may be the best option. If an organization needs to build some new space to allow all residents to have private rooms (a core principle of both models), building some Green House homes together with remodeling the existing building into households is an excellent combined approach - promoting options and choices on campus (providing choices and options are foundational principles underpinning all good Green House, small house, and household models).

The model or models an organization chooses to implement should be based on visiting many different models, attending multiple workshops, and talking at length to proponents of each approach. This decision is worth investing a great amount of time and resources into because it is a 20- to 30-year commitment. The ultimate choice should meet the preferences and needs of the residents you will serve as well meeting your organization's mission and situation. Should an organization chose two or more models, their operating philosophy and structure must be closely aligned to avoid confusion and conflict between shared staff (e.g., nursing) and management.

For workshops and visits, please contact The Green House project (www.thegreenhouseproject.org) and Action Pact at www.culturechangenow.com.

7. Question: Where could I find a traditional nursing home that has remodeled and reorganized into households that I may be able to tour?

Answer: There are many organizations that you could visit. Feel free to email lavrene@actionpact.com for organizations near you.

8. Question: What do you look for in staff who will be working in this new living environment/workplace?

Answer: In small homes and households, passion is key. It can be a noisy or quiet passion for residents but it must be demonstrated rather than simply asserted. Observing candidates with residents and including residents in the interview process are excellent components to identify this passion. Candidates who have an intuitive capacity to engage with residents with respect and equality will have a strong start.

Both models demand key competencies and a strong capacity in critical thinking skills, interpersonal sensitivity, and teamwork. Each of these characteristics requires flexibility and problem solving skills. Look for candidates who have proven success in jobs that require both. Someone who loves routines or a great deal of structure will not thrive in households or small homes.

In the household model, ‘versatile’ workers, rather than the small homes ‘universal’ workers, are the norm. This may open the employment pool a little wider to staff that are not physically capable to handle some care responsibilities or may not be interested in one role or another. However, it is still very important that everyone you hire be willing and interested in cross-training. This willingness is particularly important for professional staff that you hire for households – applicants with degrees in social work, activities, dietary, administration, nursing – all should be willing to cross-train in at least one other skill set, and open to reaching out to assist outside their primary function at least 20% of the time.

9. Question: In terms of admission, do the small house residents get to decide whether they will accept a particular resident who wants to join their house?

Answer: Typically residents of small houses and households do not and should not be involved in individual decision regarding admissions. This would present significant legal and ethical issues. However, they should be involved in shaping and adjusting admissions practices and policies over time to create good practices in conformance with organizational and societal values. Residents should be involved in creating a welcoming process for new residents.

The existing policies should be disclosed and discussed with potential residents prior to moving-in so they are well aware of who they will or may be living with. Residents should NEVER be moved out of a house to make room for a new admission. We must always remember that this is the resident’s home.

As noted in Question 8, it is most appropriate that residents have a say as to new staff. Many households and small houses encourage the residents to participate in

the hiring process. Performance issues should also have resident input - we know of instances where residents (and the staff team) have 'fired' someone who was not performing satisfactorily. Residents should also participate in orienting new staff.

10. Question: Are there skilled nursing small houses in neighborhoods in communities?

Answer: There are skilled nursing Green House/small houses homes in neighborhoods in limited cases where building sites are available at the edge of campuses and front on a residential street. In these cases, the small houses are truly integrated on a neighborhood street across from and among regular single family homes. Where this is possible, it is the most complete realization of the small house and Green House Project's goals to normalize long-term care and integrate it back into our communities. Where a campus or site does not afford this opportunity, it is more difficult because state and federal licensing rules require that homes be adjacent to each other to be licensed as one. Being licensed together is critical for financial viability due to economies of overhead costs. The Green House Project is working with several projects and one state to explore the possibility of Green House pairs being imbedded on scattered sites but licensed as one. There is no indication at this stage whether this approach will be accepted at a state or federal licensing and certification level.

11. Question: Where can we get organizational charts (they were hard to read on the slides) as well as examples of floor plans?

We have attached the charts that were included in the slides. For more detailed explanation of organizational designs and floor plans, read [In Pursuit of the Sunbeam](#) by Steve Shields and LaVrene Norton (Chapters 9 and 10) available for purchase at www.culturechangenow.com and The Green House Guide Book (available without charge) at www.thegreenhouseproject.org.

12. Question: Is there a business case for the Green House model?

Answer: The Green House Project offers one-on-one technical assistance to determine financial feasibility using a detailed and powerful financial model. The model uses inputs from local costs and expected revenues so that the answer is relevant to the specific location and organization. We will develop a more generic business case based on current financial data collection initiatives. These initiatives, in field pilot stage now, will eventually collect, compare, and benchmark operating results from all open Green House homes. A business case or similar document should be available in late 2009 or early 2010. For more information regarding the Green House financial model and technical assistance or joining the Green House Project, please contact Marilyn Ellis at mellis@ncbcapitalimpact.org.

13. Question: Is there a business case for the household model?

Answer: The workbook: [The Household Model Business Case](#) by Steve Shields and David Slack is available at www.culturechangenow.com.

CLINICAL SUPPORT TEAM



