

## LOCAL

# State hospital counting on program for revenue

■ **Camarillo:** Therapeutic services to be offered on an outpatient basis.

**By Maja Beckstrom**  
Staff writer

In an effort to increase revenue, Camarillo State Hospital plans to start a day program for mentally ill people who live outside the sprawling campus tucked against the hills south of Camarillo.

The first client, a Ventura County woman in her 30s, will enroll in the new outpatient program today.

"We'd like to see it go up to about 40 clients," said Alan Murray, who oversees the hospital's

programs for mentally ill adults. "That may be optimistic, but it seems there is a definite population out there to serve."

The hospital will offer everything from computer classes to one-on-one therapy for people who suffer from serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or clinical depression, he said.

Starting a day program is a major step for a hospital that has traditionally limited services to those admitted to the hospital. But it was either evolve or close down, according to Lanette Castleman, hospital executive assistant.

"We have to move with the times or we're going to fall by the wayside," she said, adding that the number of mentally ill

patients living at the hospital has dwindled since 1991 when the state legislature turned over control for psychiatric patients to the counties.

Counties have pulled patients out of state hospitals and placed them in community programs or the locked wards of cheaper private institutions, she said.

As a result, only about 360 mentally ill patients are now at Camarillo State Hospital, as compared to 585 in 1992, according to the state Department of Mental Health. State hospitals in Napa and Los Angeles County also recently received authorization from the state to offer day programs for non-residents, Murray said. Administrators of Ventura County's mental health programs applaud the state's



DAVID HARTUNG / Staff photographer

**Outpatient care:** Alan Murray, who oversees adult programs at Camarillo State Hospital, talks about the facility's new outpatient project.

foray into outpatient care.

"The program will be geared to prevent hospitalization, which is very costly," said Salvador M. Sandoval, who oversees the county's adult mental health services.

His department runs 10 clinics, scattered from Ventura to Simi

Valley, where teams of psychiatrists and social workers scramble to keep up with a growing population of mentally ill.

The county provides counseling, medical evaluations, job training and other services for about 1,500 children and adults, he said.