

CAMARILLO

STATE

HOSPITAL

HISTORY

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In 1929, the State Legislature appropriated \$1,000,000.00 for the establishment of a new mental hospital in Southern California to relieve overcrowding in the other state hospitals. In 1931, the Legislature appropriated an additional \$455,600.00 for the construction and equipping of a patient's unit. In 1932 the present site of 1,648 acres, located 4.5 miles south of Camarillo, was purchased for approximately \$425,000.00. The hospital was built under WPA auspices and due to a lack of a sufficient local labor force, people came from all around the country to build the hospital. Construction was started on the first portion of the male "custodial" unit and was ready for occupancy in the summer of 1936. Initially, the facility housed patients only in what is now known as the South Complex with the "Bell Tower Building" serving as the original Administration building. The first 410 patients were admitted to the facility on November 1, 1936.

The hospital continued to receive Legislative appropriations for construction and expansion and construction of the north Complex was initiated in 1949. Camarillo experienced one of the most phenomenal increases in patient population of any institution in California's history. From a mere 410 patients in 1936, the population grew to 1,082 in 1937; 2,501 in 1940, 4,123 in 1945, 4,960 in 1950, 6,748 on April 8, 1953, 6,865 on June 30, 1955 and in excess of 7,000 patients in 1957.

During the years of expansion, alterations were made to the existing ranch buildings to accommodate 100 "working patients" to assist in extensive farm work and operations. The hospital was able to keep farming operations abreast of the increasing population with increased acreage and vegetable production and by growing alfalfa for the 560 Holstein cows in our dairy. Farm acreage consisted of 304 acres of Alfalfa, 227 acres devoted to vegetables, 178 acres of grain crops, and 80 acres of orchards. In 1949 the Receiving and Treatment (R&T) Building and the present Administration Building were completed.

In 1963, the hospital was honored by the American Psychiatric Association with the Bronze Service Achievement Award for its initiation of a new one-hour admission procedure.

In 1969, the Lanterman-Petris Short Act became effective. This law eliminated the previous indefinite commitments of persons who were found by a court to be mentally disabled. The new laws required automatic judicial review of every decision to hospitalize a person involuntarily beyond a very limited period-usually any period longer than 17 days and required annual court reviews for individuals with long term commitments.

In 1971, the treatment staff of the facility was reorganized into the present program management concept which established treatment programs for persons with similar needs. Each treatment program is led by a Program Director who is a mental health professional and all the staff in the program are administratively responsible to the Program Director. In 1976, the first Executive Director was appointed.

In 1983 "Activity Centers", an innovative approach to treatment provision, was initiated at the facility. The Activity Centers provided day treatment off the living units and clients left their living units at various times of the day and evening to attend therapy groups, activity groups and educational programs. The Camarillo State Hospital service delivery system advocates client participation, responsibility, performance, and productivity. We endorse the concept that all individuals with disabilities deserve training and treatment that will enable them to move toward independent functioning and a less restrictive living environment.

The Psychiatric Rehabilitation Service Program provides adults with mental disabilities, and who present long-standing needs in life skills and behavioral problems, a structured treatment service including rehabilitation therapy, behavior modification, Adult Education, pre-vocational training, and Independent Living Skills. A day treatment center provides treatment focused on meeting specific needs, maximizing client independence, and return to community living.

The Adult Acute Psychiatric Admission Program provides evaluation and assessment services to newly admitted adults, utilizing an interdisciplinary treatment team approach. A treatment program is designed to stabilize and treat the client utilizing treatment modalities such as group and individual therapy, milieu therapy, chemotherapy, behavior modification techniques, and teaching modules. All clients are involved in the day treatment center which provides intensive community-oriented skills training to clients, focusing on the development of effective social skills, medication management, independent living skills, and substance abuse training.

The Adolescent & Youth Treatment Program serves clients with mental and emotional disabilities. Treatment focuses on educational needs, family conflict reduction, life skills training, and vocational training. The Adolescent and Children's Treatment program provides highly individualized psychiatric, psychological, social, educational, and rehabilitative treatment services. The Re-Education Project has been designed as a continuation of services for children showing progress in the Children's Treatment Center. These children reside in a house on our facility grounds during the week and at home with their families on weekends. Each child's daily life experiences becomes a part of the treatment program here at the facility and at home with their families.

Research conducted at Camarillo State Hospital is under joint sponsorship of our facility and the Neuropsychiatric Institute of the University of California, Los Angeles. UCLA faculty members located at the facility conduct applied research and training on the causes, treatment, and prevention of developmental disabilities and schizophrenia. This research involves a variety of disciplinary approaches including Applied Behavioral Analysis and Theory; Biological Psychiatry; Neuropsychology; Psychophysiology; and Social Psychiatry.

The Mental Health Clinical Research Center for the Study of Schizophrenia is one of ten centers in the United States funded by the National Institute of Mental Health for long-term intensive study of major psychiatric problems. Research is conducted on the social and family factors found in schizophrenia and on the development and evaluation of new forms of psychosocial and drug therapy.

The Gero-Psychiatric/Acute Medical Surgical Services Program serves a wide age range of clients exhibiting symptoms of psychiatric disturbances by providing rehabilitative, psychosocial and skilled nursing care with the ultimate goal of assisting clients to return to a community setting. The Acute Medical/Surgical unit provides clients with specialized medical, neurological, and surgical care. Clients in need of specialized medical services are transferred to this treatment setting and returned to their home units after the specific medical need is met.

At the present time we are serving a population of 419 clients from throughout California. The "vision" for the facility, "Enhancing Independence Through Innovation" is put into practice throughout the programs and departments of the facility by dedicated staff who provide care and treatment for individuals with mental disabilities. The role of Camarillo State Hospital has changed drastically since first opening in 1936. It has evolved from a locked institution for the severely mentally ill to a facility that provides innovative treatment modalities to help stabilize individuals with mental disabilities and return them to their community as soon as possible.

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When traveling from the Los Angeles area to Camarillo State Hospital and Developmental Center take the Ventura Freeway to Pleasant Valley Road. Turn left and go over the freeway. Continue on this road until you reach Lewis Road (Stop Sign). Turn left on Lewis Road and continue down Lewis Road until you see the entrance to Camarillo State Hospital and Developmental Center.

If you get lost, the hospital number is 484-3661. Call us and we will assist you.

