

2060 Fairmont Drive  
San Leandro, CA 94578

## OVERVIEW

Mental illness is a medical condition that disables a person's capacity for coping in daily life. Just as diabetes is a disease affecting the pancreas, mental illness affects the brain, with one in 20 California adults suffering from severe mental health conditions. Because Alameda Health System (AHS) consists of both medical centers and a behavioral health facility, John George Psychiatric Hospital (JGPH), it is able to integrate the delivery of mental and medical services.


JGPH opened in 1992 and is named after Alameda County Supervisor and mental health advocate, John George. It is an 80-bed facility providing acute care to adults. With more than 10,400 psychiatric emergency visits per year, JGPH handles nearly 100 percent of psychiatric emergencies in Alameda County. Treatment includes medication, psychotherapy, group therapy, occupational therapy, and activity therapy. Other services include the Peer Mentor Program, chaplain services, pet therapy, and community recovery support.

A multi-disciplinary staff skilled in acute psychiatric care assists in stabilizing patients, facilitating personal goals, skill development, and resources needed for recovery. In recent years, JGPH has been at the forefront of evidence-based practices and data analytics, leading innovative models of care, propelling medical professional achievement, improving patient satisfaction scores, and obtaining recognition as one of the nation's foremost behavioral health care institutions.

## CARE INNOVATION

At JGPH, a therapeutic model of solution-focused care moves patients toward recovery. Patients receive an evaluation to determine appropriate level of care, from pharmacology to behavioral intervention. Multi-disciplinary teams of physicians, nurses, and administrators meet regularly to assess patient needs and create a guide for patient-centered treatment.

Ground-breaking medical practices at JGPH include non-coercive alternatives in the treatment of agitated patients, which have led to significant reductions in the use of seclusion and physical restraints. In April 2013, restraints were used on two out of 1,397 patients, as compared to programs using restraints for up to 30 percent of their emergency cases. The use of seclusion-restraint in treatments dropped from 35 episodes to five episodes per 1,000 patient days. Assaults by patients also dropped 50 percent. Success rates at JGPH have sparked national interest in its innovative methods as an effective and compassionate model for broad adoption.



**"Improving patient outcomes starts with simple things like a hot breakfast and clean sheets, and relating to patients as people with dignity."**

- Judy Linn  
Nursing Director

## PATIENT SATISFACTION

JGPH is ranked in the top 10 percent of psychiatric units and hospitals in the U.S. for patient satisfaction. Hospitals in this group include Harvard's McLean Psychiatric Hospital and Johns Hopkins. JGPH's expanded programs and partnerships have contributed to its high patient satisfaction scores, including Partial and Intensive Outpatient day-treatment programs, the award-winning Peer Mentor program, and the establishment of a new chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) in Alameda County. Efforts to engage the community and provide important resources to patients for sustained recovery have been built on the hospital's core of innovative care and compassionate medical staff.

**"The Alameda Model focuses on immediate treatment at the outpatient level of care, with a goal of avoiding hospitalization altogether. It bypasses ERs completely in two-thirds of cases, further reducing patient boarding and ER overcrowding. These are national health care reform goals."**

- Scott Zeller, MD,  
Chief of PES

## THE ALAMEDA MODEL

In response to a nationwide dilemma where psychiatric patients "board" without treatment in medical emergency rooms (ERs) for an average of more than 10 hours in California, JGPH conducted a demonstration project (The Alameda Model) to demonstrate how transferring patients from general ERs to regional psychiatric emergency services (PES) such as JGPH, significantly reduces boarding times. Using the Alameda Model, ER Boarding was reduced by 80 percent, and less than 2 hours. The demonstration also found that PES may stabilize over 75 percent of mental health patients in crisis, resulting in reduced demand for inpatient beds. The study is believed to have federal policy importance by the American College of Emergency Physicians, New England Journal of Medicine, NAMI, and members of Congress.

## DISTINCTION

JGPH and its staff have earned numerous accolades from local and national health care organizations for improvements in care. NAMI California recently granted JGPH its Outstanding Treatment Facility award, citing Labyrinth Therapy, generous visiting hours, patient access to news, music, and phones, community support groups, and zero tolerance for seclusion and restraint, among other advancements.

Administrator Guy Qvistgaard was honored with the Community Service Award from the Alameda County Mental Health Board, while Director of Nursing, Judy Linn, received the Excellence in Leadership Award from the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.

**"At JGPH, we work to improve the quality and experience of care. Recognition of our work and accomplishments validates our collective effort to improve the lives of people affected by mental health issues. It means we've been successful toward our goal of making life better for our patients."**

- Guy Qvistgaard  
JGPH Administrator