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Announcement: Change for County Contracted Outpatient Services at Hillcrest

For nearly half a century, the Department of Psychiatry at UC San Diego School of Medicine has partnered with Behavioral Health Services of San Diego County to operate the Gifford Clinic in Hillcrest. The clinic provides care to individuals with serious mental disorders living in the central region of the county, and for whom the County has the responsibility to assure mental health services.

For the past 20 years, the department has also operated the Co-Occurring Disorders (COD) Program for County patients, which provides fully integrated treatment for people with substance abuse and co-occurring mental disorders. The two programs have served more than 37,000 County patients.

However, this partnership will soon end. During a periodic contract renewal process, the County opted to award the mental health care contract to another organization: Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC). As a result, all current County contracted patients at Gifford and in the COD programs will be transferred to other health care providers by July 1. We are now focused upon ensuring a safe and smooth transition for these patients. For more information, contact Gifford Clinic at 619-543-7795 or UPAC at 619-232-6454.

We would like to take this moment to honor our long and important relationship with the County of San Diego. We hope to continue our successful collaboration in training new psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians to serve the critical needs of the community. We will be exploring new opportunities to work with the county in developing demonstration programs that further improve evidence-based mental health services.

As the region's only academic medical center, these programs have also provided primary outpatient training for psychiatry residents; psychology interns; social work, marriage and family therapy interns; and psychiatric nurse practice students. Approximately 470 residents, 500 medical students, 100 psychology interns and 380 Masters-level trainees have learned how to provide outstanding clinical care through their training at the Gifford Clinic. The synergy between UC San Diego and the County has resulted in outstanding clinical care for those with serious mental disorders while simultaneously preparing new generations of highly trained, specialized health care professionals to work in our communities and beyond.

Finally, we close with a deeply grateful acknowledgement to the many current and past faculty and staff who have devoted their lives and careers to caring for a particularly vulnerable community and for helping build and sustain vital services. These efforts will continue. We have been privileged to assist and serve persons with serious mental health issues—an enduring challenge across the nation—and we are eager to continue to do so in new, innovative and different capacities in the future.

Please note that other non-County contracted outpatient Hillcrest psychiatric services will continue uninterrupted, and in fact will be expanded in the Bachman Building space at 140 W. Arbor Drive currently occupied by the Gifford Clinic.

Sincerely,

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