

1a Harris County Psychiatric Center

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Source
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UT Harris County Psychiatric Center

History and Purpose

The University of Texas Harris County Psychiatric Center (UTHCPC) was established in 1986 with a legislative mandate to function as a university mental health care hospital with a threefold mission. The original mission was one of service to patients, education of those interested in the treatment of the mentally ill and research of new methods of treatment. The hospital has since added a fourth mission component – one of providing community service in an effort to reach and educate more people about mental illness.

Programs

For the past 17 years, UTHCPC has been the primary provider of acute inpatient psychiatric care for all of Harris County's indigent residents. The Harris County Hospital District, through Ben Taub General and Quentin R. Meese hospitals, serves a limited number of psychiatric patients who enter the hospital in crisis, while Rusk State Hospital provides long-term care. Since opening, UTHCPC has provided comprehensive psychiatric and clinical social services to more than 65,000 patients. Thousands more have been reached through numerous community-based seminars, programs and educational events.

During FY 2003, UTHCPC's expanded treatment options included inpatient, intensive outpatient services and partial hospitalization programs for children and adults with mental illnesses. Services to children and adolescents include a cooperative program with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. The program, funded by Harris County, provides intensive inpatient treatment for adolescents, family therapy and follow-up services for those incarcerated in the juvenile justice system.

UTHCPC is the only facility of its kind in the state that serves as an operating unit of a major university and provides primary psychiatric care. UTHCPC serves a diverse population in culture, ethnicity, race, education and economic status (including the homeless, those with marginal incomes, private insurance and entitlements such as Medicare and Medicaid.)

UTHCPC provides clinical rotations for approximately 500 undergraduate and graduate students in medicine, nursing, psychology, pharmacy, health administration, recreation and occupational therapy, pastoral counseling and clinical social services each year.

Members of the UTHSC-H Medical School department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and the Mental Sciences Institute work in conjunction with staff at the UTHCPC on various research activities. New technologies enable sophisticated research exploring the functioning of the brain. This research may be instrumental in developing innovative treatment modalities for psychiatric disorders. Research collaborations include the UT School of Nursing at Houston, the University of Houston, the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County and the Mental Sciences Institute.

Current research projects focus on schizophrenia, depression and bipolar illnesses. At UTHCPC such research can and often does involve many areas besides medication. These include using neuro-imaging to develop more effective diagnostic procedures; refining criteria of treatment choice; improving crisis treatment options; measuring patient outcomes; developing various patient education models; and studying the effect of therapeutic interventions from all disciplines – nursing, psychology, music therapy, etc. – that improve service delivery.

Facilities

UTHCPC is a licensed 250-bed, acute care, inpatient psychiatric facility. It is housed in a three-story, 180,000 gross-square-foot facility on seven acres near the Texas Medical Center.