

History of the County's Emeline Street Complex

This section provides a chronological history of the County Buildings housed at the Emeline Street Complex and various health care services provided in each of the buildings over the years. Attachment A of this Report [not included in web version] contains a map of the Emeline Street Complex which shows the location of most of the buildings discussed in this section.

1877

A men's infirmary section was constructed at the Emeline site. The building was called the County Poor Farm and housed all manner of ill, infirmed and indigent men.

1885

The infirmary was added to and a second facility was constructed. The second facility -- a two-story building -- was the first County Hospital and accommodated surgical care and provided for chronically ill patients. The hospital was erected on land behind Building D and adjacent to Carbonera Creek which is now a parking lot.

This building remained in service for a variety of purposes until 1975 when the County was paid for its demolition. The demolition in this instance involved taking the facility down board by board for the purpose of salvaging and reselling the virgin redwood that was used in its construction.

The building was last used by the Community Action Board and housed the original CAB food distribution program which later became Food and Nutrition Services.

1925

In 1925, the original wing of the 1040/1100 Emeline building (Building E "Old County Hospital") was constructed as a modern and larger hospital facility to accommodate the growing need for health care in the community. This structure was subsequently expanded during its many years of service as the County General Hospital. The County's population in 1925 was approximately 30,000.

The 1925 facility was the only General hospital in the North Santa Cruz County until Sisters Hospital was opened by the Dominican Sisters of Adrian Michigan in 1938. The General Hospital served a critical and important role for the residents of Santa Cruz County.

1952

A Juvenile Hall was built at Emeline. The administrative offices and "cell blocks" operated until the new Juvenile Hall was constructed on Graham Hill Road in 1967.

1957

In 1957, a 21-bed hospital facility was constructed at 1060/1070 Emeline which is now known as Building F to provide care and treatment for tuberculosis patients and those with other communicable diseases. Originally called the Chest Building, this facility currently houses several of the Community Mental Health Services programs and Community Mental Health administration. The County's population was now approximately 80,000.

The 1000 Emeline Building (Building A) was also built in 1957 with Hill-Burton money to house the County's Public Health Department including the Public Health laboratory and clinics. The County Health Department was separate and distinct from the County Hospital until 1974 when the County Health Services Agency was created to improve the coordination and effectiveness of County Public Health, Medical Care and Mental Health Services. Building A currently [1991] provides space for HRA administration and the methadone program which is operated by a private non-profit contractor.

1960

The Ferguson Memorial Rehabilitation Center—1020 Emeline (Building B)—was dedicated in 1960. This building was originally constructed to provide for the care and rehabilitation of the aged, as an extended care facility, and as the center for community mental health services. Licensed for 60 beds, frail elderly indigents lived in this facility until 1974 when the closure of General Hospital made its operation economically infeasible. The Neuro-psychiatric unit was also located in this facility in the basement.

1968

The 1080 Emeline building (Building D), the new County Hospital was completed. This three-story structure was originally a 65-bed full service, 24-hour facility. It was designed with expansion potential for an additional two floors.

When the Old General Hospital was vacated, an eight-bed alcohol detoxification unit was started. Outpatient counseling for alcoholics was also started. The old hospital also housed a Youth Hostel for two years in the early 1970s and "Papa Dawson's Drug Abuse Prevention Facility."

In 1973, the County General Hospital employed over 350 hospital employees and mental health staff, with hospital care provided on a 24-hour in-patient basis. This facility included obstetrics, pediatrics, and the only emergency room in the county. Ambulances brought trauma patients from all over the County to General Hospital 24-hours a day.

Following the opening of the new County General Hospital in 1968 the Emeline Street Complex was a thriving and active operation with several twenty four a day operations. Records from this period show:

- The average daily census of inpatients during 1969–1970 at the Emeline hospital facility was 128 people.
- The total number of inpatient days were 46,220.
- There were 310 full-time equivalent employees in the Hospital alone.
- 7,000 emergency room services and 9,500 clinic visits were provided.
- 11,600 immunizations and 21,000 laboratory tests were performed.

At this time there were plans for expansion and the *County Administrative Officer's Capital Improvement Report of 1969* outlined a seven year program to add 164,750 square feet of new and improved facilities at the Emeline Street Complex. The new facilities proposed in that plan are listed below:

Item	Square Feet
Girls Group Home	3,000
Hospital Emergency Operations Center	5,000
Addition of 3 rd and 4 th Floors to the new General Hospital	36,000
Health Department Expansion	750
Hospital 1 st Floor Expansion	20,000

Welfare Building	50,000
Hospital Mental Health and Outpatient Wing	50,000
Total New Square Feet	164,750

None of the buildings listed above were ever built and shortly after this list was compiled there was a significant decline in the demand for County Inpatient Services as a result of a change in Federal health policy. From its beginning in 1873 through 1968, as a result of Federal and State law, the County was the health care provider of last resort and enjoyed an almost exclusive monopoly on the provision of health care services to the poor and the unfortunate. It was a significant responsibility and Santa Cruz County, judging from the army of facilities and services it made available, took this responsibility very seriously.

The fact that public hospitals were the health care provider of last resort and that most of their services were rendered to the poor had unfortunate consequences when Federal and State health care policy changed. As a result of their historic role County Hospitals and County Institutions, regardless of the quality of care they provided, had the stigma of second class institutions when care was given to only those persons who could not receive care anywhere else.

In 1968 the financial environment for health care delivery changed as a result of a new Federal Act which authorized and funded the Federal Medicaid Program which is known in California as Medi-Cal. This new program provided for Federal and State Payments for the health care needs of the poor at any institution which would accept Medi-Cal and not just the County.

The poor now had the option of going to other than County health care providers. Because County institutions had the reputation, often undeserved, of providing second class care, the poor exercised their option to use mainstream medicine and demand for County health care services began to decline.

1973

The general hospital function was discontinued at Emeline in 1973, and the emergency room and in-patient medical surgical and intensive care beds closed and only the neuro-psychiatric component of the County General Hospital remained in operation. The closure of the Hospital occurred largely as a result of changes in federal and state policy regarding Medicaid and MediCal coverage for persons formerly dependent on the County. The County contracted with Dominican Santa Cruz, Community and Watsonville Community Hospital to provide for emergency and inpatient hospital care. Shortly thereafter the County's extended care unit for the elderly was also closed.

1975

In 1975, the neuro-psychiatric facility was re-located from the Ferguson Building to the 2nd floor of 1080 Emeline building where the intensive care unit had been housed. Crisis evaluation and observation of the mentally ill was provided at the same location.

1983

In 1983, the inpatient psychiatric hospital was closed and patients transferred to Dominican Hospital which built a new inpatient psychiatric unit under a special contract with the County.

The 1080 Emeline building is now [1991] used as the County's outpatient clinic and houses Health Services administration, Public Health administration, Public Health Nursing, Health Education, and Alcohol and Drug Programs administration.

Sources

- *Excerpt from: Attachment 1: Background Report on the County's Emeline Street Complex, prepared by the County Administrative Office in Conjunction with the Health Services and Human Resources Agencies, pp. 1-6; Appendix F of the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Santa Cruz County Health Services/Human Resources Building, 1992.*

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