

LHH Admitting Ward Physician on LHH

The following letter to the editor appeared in the November 2004 edition of the *West Portal Monthly* newspaper, which serves various jurisdictions surrounding Laguna Honda Hospital.

Dear Editor,

The communities surrounding Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) need to know that drastic changes occurring at Laguna Honda could adversely impact neighborhood safety and property values.

In March of 2004, the admissions policy of LHH was changed over the strong objections of doctors who were concerned about patient safety.

This change was part of a plan by the Department of Public Health to transform the identity of the hospital.

Instead of caring primarily for the elderly and disabled poor of San Francisco, Dr. Mitchell Katz, the Director of [Public] Health, wants Laguna Honda to do “social rehabilitation for the urban poor.”

As a result, frail elderly, disabled, ill and dying San Franciscans may be displaced to out of county facilities while more dangerous and robust clients may be housed at Laguna Honda for “social rehabilitation.”

Because these changes to Laguna Honda thwart the will of the voters who passed the \$300 million bond measure to rebuild the hospital, a public interest lawsuit has been filed against the Department of Public Health.

There has been very little public scrutiny of these changes. I hope that the *West Portal Monthly* will review this situation.

As a Golden Gate Heights resident, I also urge my neighbors to contact Supervisor Elsbernd and Mayor Newsom asking them to ensure the safety and quality of life of Laguna Honda patients and our community.

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