



RIVERVIEW
HOSPITAL

An agency of the
Provincial Health Services Authority



East Lawn 1930 - 2005



July 1932

EAST LAWN UNIT

In 1925 it was noted that there was "a great and most pressing need" at the hospital for more bed capacity. The women's unit at the Public Hospital For The Insane at New Westminster was considerably overcrowded and recommendations were put forward for the construction of a permanent "Chronic Building" at Essondale for female patients. It was anticipated that this would take three to five years to complete.

The following is a very brief history of the East Lawn Unit and includes some of the highlights over the years. It is by no means complete and some references are included that pertained to the hospital in general.

Anna Tremere
April 18, 2005

EAST LAWN UNIT 1930 - 2005

Riverview Hospital, Coquitlam, British Columbia

1930 East Lawn Opens

October 2, 1930 saw the completion of the Chronic Female Building, with a rated capacity of 675 beds and 360,903 square feet. It would be renamed East Lawn Unit in 1950. The opening of this building eliminated the overcrowding at New Westminster with the majority of female patients being transferred from there. An area in the front centre on the third floor was set up as an infirmary for female staff. The first Nurses Home was opened in November to provide accommodation for the staff. An Occupational Therapist was hired for the women and was an invaluable asset. The manufacturing of nurses' uniforms, patients' clothing and sewing rooms for repairs of all types of clothing were also carried out by the department. This year also noted the beginning of the nurses' training school and classes were held in East Lawn on the fifth floor. Classes were also being held at the New Westminster hospital for their nurses.

A "fever machine" was now being used in the treatment of general paresis as well as the standard malaria, tryparsamide and bismuth therapies.

1931 First Social Service Department

1931 saw the inauguration of the Social Service Department, which would be of inestimable benefit to the patients at the hospital. The effects of the Depression were still apparent and it was noted that the gross daily per capita cost of \$1.12 was a peak year.

1933

In 1933 Hydrotherapy was being carried out, two Occupational Therapy Department heads, an Instructress for nurses, a Social Service worker, Dietician and additional graduate nurses were hired.

1937

In 1937 Insulin Shock Treatment for dementia praecox was introduced and Metrazol Convulsive Therapy was started shortly after.



Occupational Therapy Dept. - 1950

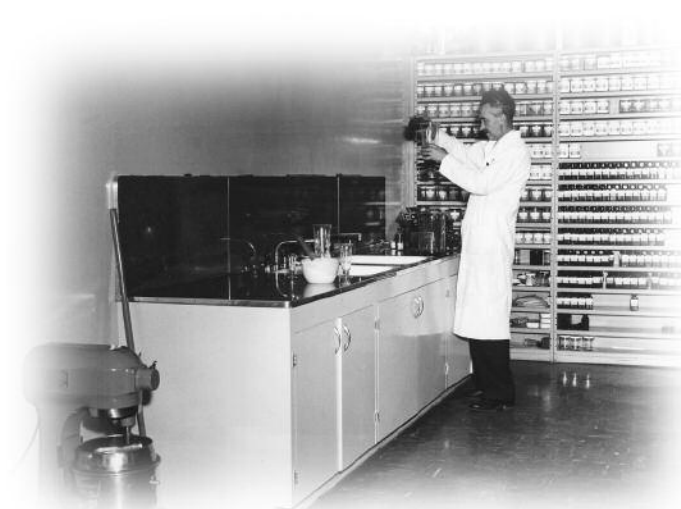
1939 Ward Opens for Tuberculosis Patients

One ward was remodelled in 1939 and organized for the care and treatment of the female patients suffering with Tuberculosis, active and inactive. Included on this ward were patients with Typhoid Fever. The ward population was in excess of 100. This ward remained in use until the opening of North Lawn Unit in 1955. The hospital had grown to such proportions that a full time Pharmacist was appointed in this year. Prior to that all work at the pharmacy had been carried out by doctors.

1941 Electrical Shock Therapy First Used

In 1941 it was noted that a "common" psychosis was schizophrenia. Metrazol Therapy was on the wane and "Electrical Shock Therapy" was being introduced.

Overcrowding was increasing and becoming more difficult, particularly in the female unit.



Pharmacy: Mixing Section - 1956



Nursing Arts - 1956

Shortages were becoming more apparent in the nursing school as large numbers were leaving to be married, taking up other occupations or doing war-related work. The *Mental Hospitals Act* was redrafted and the phrases “lunatic” and “hospital for the insane” were deleted from the Act.

1942 War Depletes Staff

During 1942 staffing was noted as three students to one graduate nurse and ward aides were introduced to assist the nurses. The increase in the number of staff resignations was attributed to the war and it was noted that it was impossible to obtain a trained psychiatric social worker anywhere in Canada.

1945 Mental Health Commission

By 1945 considerable progress had been made to have the hospital environment meet the high

standards of the Mental Health Commission. Daily newspapers were supplied to all wards and additional occupational, work and recreational activities were being provided.

1946 First Female Physician Joins Staff

The first female physician was hired in 1946, lobotomies had been performed on a limited number of patients and it was noted that advances in treatment over the past few years were noteworthy but the demand for services was far in advance of facilities for carrying it out.

1947

On June 1, 1947 the eight-hour day, 44-hour week was put into effect in all departments except for the female nursing staff. Prior to this staff worked a 12-hour day.

1948 Sports Day Tradition Begins

The first annual Sports Day was held in September of 1948 with staff and 1,500 patients from various buildings participating. Severe flooding in May and June of this year wiped out most of the crops at Colony Farm. During this time, 240 patients, from the farm cottage and annex buildings, were transferred to Essondale. Livestock were also brought up to the hospital grounds. Records indicated that staff and patients worked day and night to ensure that complete flooding of Colony Farm was avoided. The hospital fire truck, a 1929 La France, was on the dyke pumping water, 24 hours a day, for 17 days.

1949 Nurses Get Eight Hour Days

In 1949 Coma Insulin was considered the most effective treatment for Schizophrenia, Electroshock Therapy (Electroconvulsive Therapy) was utilized for the treatment of “affective disturbances” and Electronarcosis Therapy was introduced. On December 1st, the eight-hour day, 44-hour week was instituted for nurses.

1951 Overcrowded Building

A survey of overcrowding was requested by the Federal Government in 1951, based on the standards of square footage required per bed. East Lawn had a bed capacity of 921. Beds set up were 1,445. The basement and attic were also being utilized for patients. It was also in this year that East Lawn was quarantined for three



First Sports Day - 1948

months due to an epidemic of scarlet fever.

Mental Health Week was first observed in Canada in 1951. The first “Open House” at the hospital was held May 4th at Crease Clinic and was considered a highly successful event with approximately 500 people touring the Clinic.

1952 First Ward Rounds

Ward rounds commenced in East Lawn in 1952. Medical staff, occupational therapy and social services staff went to one ward, each week, in rotation to meet with the nursing staff. The Occupational Therapy Department was reorganized and daily visits were made to all wards except two. Plastic sectional plates were replaced with china plates on some of the wards. A Music Therapist was hired and in conjunction with the Recreational Therapy Department began individual ward music appreciation tours.

1953 East Lawn Gets Morgue Facilities

Morgue facilities in West Lawn were moved to East Lawn in 1953. H2 was reorganized and became the infirmary ward for the unit and it was the start of the B.C.G. Program for immunization against tuberculosis for all patients.

1954 New Drugs Introduced

In 1954 Largactyl (Chlorpromazine) was introduced, followed by Reserpine. These two drugs marked a significant change in the treatment of mental illness and it was noted that they greatly reduced the severity and length of symptoms. Wards were gradually being opened and many patients were given ground privileges. Four television sets were donated to the hospital by the “Hoo Hoo Club.”

1955 Volunteer Program Begins

The organization of a Volunteer Program in 1955 was viewed as one of the finest achievements of the year. An area was set aside in East Lawn for an apparel shop and plans were underway to initiate a gift programme for the next Christmas.

Ward F2 was completely refurnished, the entire building was rewired and additional parking facilities were provided out front. New dish washing facilities were installed, a special diet kitchen was opened and a Mrs. A. Austen enjoyed the distinction of being the first female cook employed in the department. A schoolteacher was appointed to the hospital and a schoolroom was established in the basement of East Lawn.

1956 Open House Draws Crowds

An “Open House” tour was held April 24, 1956 in East Lawn. Large numbers of the public and the press visited. There was an increase in the use of tranquillizing drugs and a decrease in Coma Insulin therapy. An eight-week menu rotation was established and dinner was now the last meal of the day instead of the noon meal. Staff was supplied with nametags.



Presentation of the first TV set - 1954



Typical Dorm (F3 Ward) - 1950



Wards Open House - 1956

date. Staff was permitted to bring their immediate families and patients brought their families and visitors. It was also the first time that nursing staff wore civilian clothing to such an event.

Hydrotherapy, sleep therapy, foam and sedative baths were all discontinued during the '50's.

1960

Group nursing was initiated on H4B in 1960 and the majority of wards were now open.

1961 Rehabilitation Program Started

In 1961 East Lawn inaugurated a basic rehabilitation program. It was developed to include a wider variety of basic skills essential to all patients returning to the community after a prolonged period of hospitalization. Continuing advances in psychopharmacology played a significant role. However, it was felt that increased involvement in group and milieu therapy, combined with developing community and after-care programs would offer the greatest possibility of success. There was increased emphasis on psychosocial rehabilitation, vocational services, open wards and ward community meetings. An Activities of Daily Living Unit was organized and a mini-care program utilizing former staff cottages would be established.

1965 Nursing Services Integrated

1965 noted the reorganization of the nursing services. Traditionally, they were organized into two divisions with the women caring for female patients and the men caring for male patients. Gradual integration of these two services into one nursing service for each unit occurred. On February 16th a male assistant head nurse was transferred to East Lawn.

Amalgamation Creates Riverview Hospital

A new *Mental Health Act* was passed which would consolidate all features of five Acts dealing with Mental Health Clinics, Schools of Mental Defective Acts, Provincial Child Guidance Clinics and Provincial Mental Health Centres. Changes were made in the

1957

In 1957 the Charge Nurses in East Lawn requested a change in policy regarding the graduate nurses uniforms. The change would allow them the option of wearing a one-piece white uniform or the standard white uniform with bib and apron.

1959 Men and Women Allowed to Mingle

Mixed dining commenced between male and female patients in East and West Lawn in 1959. It began on an irregular basis and was usually a part of an evening's entertainment program. In June, staff from all departments and patients from all areas of the hospital organized what was considered the most successful Sports Day to



Sports Day - 1963

admission and discharge procedures and in review procedures, which necessitated administrative changes. When the Act came into effect Crease Clinic and the Provincial Mental Hospital, Essondale, were combined to function as one mental health facility and would be renamed Riverview Hospital.

1966 Patients, Staff Integrated on Wards

By 1966 major emphasis was being placed on the selection and preparation of patients for community placement. Integration of patients had begun on some wards and male and female staff were also being integrated. On May 1st the men's and women's nursing divisions united into one nursing service under the Director of Nursing. East Lawn was redecorated throughout and supplied with a central linen supply area. The Volunteer Department started a new program referred to as the "Volunteer Luncheon Program," which provided an opportunity for patients to visit the homes of volunteers for luncheons. They also organized a group of professional hairdressers who completed a program of beauty culture in East Lawn involving 40 patients and 10 student nurses.

1967 Significant Staff Reorganization

1967 saw continued growth and change with the appointment of Unit Nursing Supervisors in all buildings and two Assistant Unit Supervisors to East Lawn and West Lawn. Three female psychiatric nurses were appointed to the position of Chief Grade 1, which marked the opportunity for the promotion of this group above the position of Charge Nurse. Clerk typists were also made available to free nursing supervisors of clerical duties.

A time and activity study for all levels of ward staff, for a seven-day period, was undertaken to provide clarification of the functions carried out by nursing staff. As a result several positions were released to the Housekeeping Department to free nursing staff of major housekeeping duties.

The Minister of Health Services and Hospital Insurance stated, *"The Mental Health Branch is undergoing a major reorganization to meet the changing patterns of care for the mentally ill and retarded. It will no longer be primarily service oriented, but will assume increased responsibility for the overall aspects of mental health planning in order to facilitate decentralization and regionalization of mental health programs throughout the Province."* This reorganization would have significant impact on the hospital for many years to come.

1969 Start of Environmental Management Program

In 1969 an "environmental management" program was initiated. Drapes were supplied to wards and consideration was being given to allow lockers and drawers for patients to care for their own personal effects. A start was also made in the introduction of synthet-



Fire Hall Staff Training



Christmas Decorations



Staff Lecture Room - 1950

Lawn was closed. Forty female patients, in the preliminary stages of returning to the community, were moved to former Nurses' Residence 8, now known as Brookside. A ward was established for female Order-In-Council patients to reside in East Lawn but was provided psychiatric treatment by the forensic psychiatrists.

During the '70's decentralization of mental health services had begun with the division of the Province into mental health regions. A comprehensive Community Mental Health service was developed and it was the beginning of a formal partnership, between Riverview and the community, in sharing responsibility for delivering mental health services.

1988 Patients Get the Vote

In 1988 the "J" side of East Lawn moved to Crease Clinic and the vacated wards were renovated and fire escapes installed on both sides of the building. The "F" wing was renovated next.

A milestone was reached in 1988 with the transfer of governance and management of Riverview from the Ministry of Health, to the new B.C. Mental Health Society, with an interim board of provincially appointed trustees.

A Supreme Court ruling reached an historic decision when it was determined that the mentally ill, in psychiatric facilities, had the right to vote in national elections.

1989

The Personal Protection Alarm System was being utilized in some areas in East Lawn in 1989 and Clinical Records and the Social Work Department moved into the third floor "J" wing.

1990 Mental Health Initiative Announced

The '90's began with the announcement of the "Mental Health Initiative." It was a 10-year plan proposing a new mental health care system, focusing on replacing Riverview with smaller, more specialized regional facilities and relocating some hospital staff and resources into the community. Included was to be the maintenance of a smaller, specialized centre of excellence at Riverview.



Staff Square Dance - 1950

ic fabrics and coloured materials to replace the standard white linens and sheeting.

1970

In 1970 a Behaviour Modification Project was initiated in East Lawn. The project was supported by a National Health grant to the Psychology Department.

1973 New Department

A Speech and Hearing Department, situated in East Lawn, was formed in 1973 for those patients with speech and language difficulties. New fire escapes were finished.

1974 Community Mental Health Services Begun

In 1974, 50 male patients were transferred to East Lawn when the "C" side of West

Primary care for the patients on F2 was transferred to the Organic Brain Syndrome Program in North Lawn in 1990. The Review Panel office relocated from Crease Clinic to East Lawn, F1 was renovated to be utilized as the hospital pharmacy and the East Lawn Nursing office moved to Crease Clinic.

1991

In 1991 Vocational Services moved from the workshop behind West Lawn into the old pharmacy area in East Lawn. Four wards from Crease Clinic were relocated to East Lawn and construction on the "H" wing necessitated moving five wards to Crease Clinic.

1992 BCMHS Board Replaced

In 1992 the BCMHS board was replaced with trustees representatives, consumers, family members and other citizens.

1993 Patient Sexuality Policy, Psycho-Pharmacy Residency Program Firsts in Canada

In 1993, as a part of the downsizing project, F3B closed, with staff and patients being relocated. A Bill of Rights and a Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire was distributed throughout the hospital. A Patient Sexuality Policy, the first in Canada, was implemented. Telephones were installed on all wards in the hospital and at Penn Hall, free of charge, for patients' use. A manual, Environmental Needs of the Mentally Ill, was produced and the Family Resource Centre opened. A hospital-wide Smoking Policy was implemented. All wards were equipped with specifically designated, enclosed areas, with special smoke exhaust systems for patient use when smoking indoors. A new computerized scheduling system for nursing staff was implemented. Canada's first Psycho-Pharmacy Residency Program was established at Riverview, affiliated with UBC. A Peer Counselling Program was developed for BCGEU members.

1994 Another First With Charter of Patient Rights

1994 saw the approval of the Charter of Patients Rights, the first of its kind in Canada. The Mental Health Law Program and the Patient Empowerment Society began. A staff skills computerized database was established for all staff to provide profiles for the development of educational programs and labour strategy adjustments. Two documents were produced regarding management of staff assaults and two new policies were introduced. An Innovations Award Program was endorsed and Freedom of Information Legislation was passed. The Ombudsman submitted a report on the hospital entitled "Listening: A Review of Riverview Hospital." Criteria were established for locked wards in non-ward areas of the hospital and for wards.

1995

In 1995, G.R.A.S.P. was ready for implementation and the Tuck Shop closed and became part of Penn Hall. The Ombudsman announced that all 94 recommendations made in the "Listening"



Day Room



Fire Drill



East Seclusion Room on East 2 - 1950

report were accepted and implemented.

1996 Patients Get Bus Passes

1996 noted a pilot project that provided bus passes for patients taking public transportation. The *Employment Standards Act* had a significant impact on patient programs. The implementation of Program Management was approved.

1998 New Mental Health Plan

A new Mental Health Plan was released in January of 1998, which updated the old initiative, known as the Blue Book. This new plan, "*Revitalizing and Rebuilding British Columbia's Mental Health System*," was to be implemented over seven years. A Public Administrator was appointed to oversee the transition of the hospital under the government's regionalization program.

2000 BCMHS Dissolved

Significant changes occurred within the hospital since that time, with major organizational restructuring, based on a matrix management model and the implementation of Program Management. On February 16, 2000, the Ministry of Health appointed the Board of Trustees of the B.C. Mental Health Society and the position of Public Administrator ceased.

2001 Provincial Health Services Authority Formed

December of 2001 saw the creation of the Provincial Health Services Authority. Included with adult and forensic psychiatric services were adult and forensic services, child and adolescent mental health programs, and a wide variety of other specialized mental health services throughout the province.

Hospital-wide reorganization of services resulted in many changes to all programs. East Lawn became a 250 bed Specialized Rehabilitation Unit. Included were a Secure Care Program, a Treatment and Rehabilitation Program, a Longer Term Rehabilitation Program and a Self-Induced Water Intoxication Program. A 20-bed Refractory Psychosis Research Unit was also located within East Lawn. Also affiliated with East Lawn were two former nurses' residences, Leaside and Brookside, with 25 beds each, utilized for Community Preparation Programs.

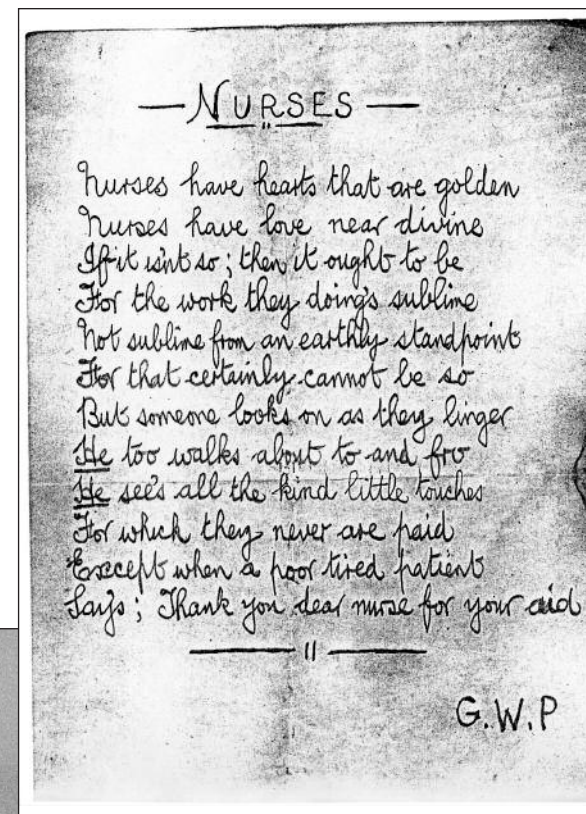
1930 - 2005

From its beginnings in 1930, as an all-female unit, with ward counts in excess of 150, East Lawn evolved to integrated, specialized wards with an average of 25 bed counts. As part of the downsizing process wards were gradually being closed in East Lawn with patients transferring to other community facilities or other wards within the hospital.

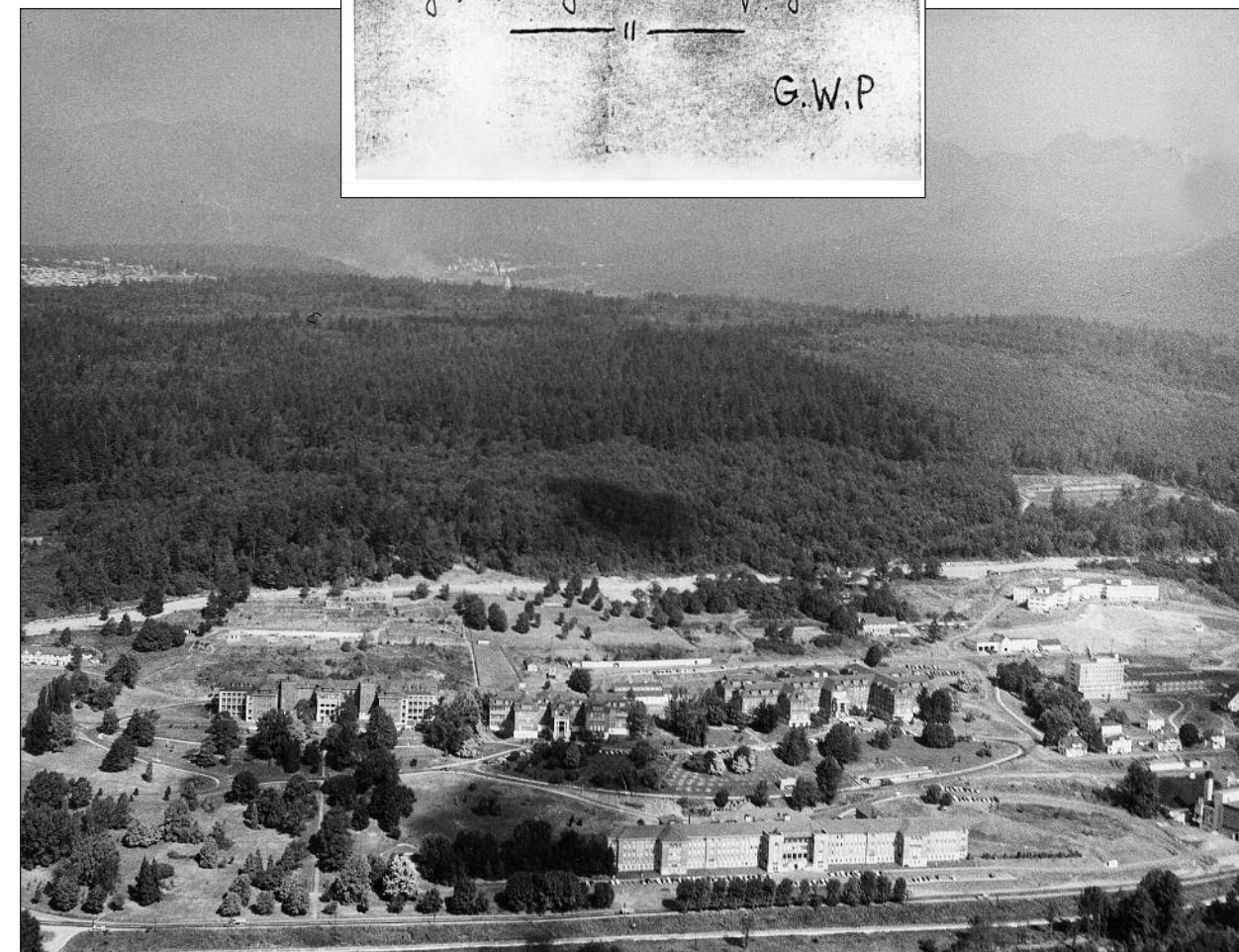
East Lawn would close in 2005.



Hallway



Note to the East Lawn Nurses from a patient.



Site Overview