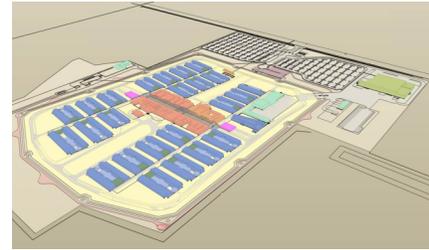


Mark Goldman & Associates

Research on How Prisons for Mentally & Physically Ill Inmates can be designed to Better Support Treatment & Rehabilitation –

For the California Prison Receivership, California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation



Under mandate by the federal courts and the California Prison Receivership, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation was required to design new facilities and operations to better serve more than 10,000 inmates with considerable physical and mental health issues. The new facilities were to be “patient-driven,” aimed at supporting physical and mental health within safe and secure settings. The Receivership and CDCR wanted to ensure that their new correctional health care facilities applied, or at least considered, research on environment and behavior, including Evidence Based Design. Mark Goldman & Associates (MGA) was hired to review and summarize all available and relevant environment and behavior research on correctional, physical health, and mental health care environments.

Through structured telephone interviews and email correspondence with experts in health care, mental health care, correctional health care, environment and behavior, design, and cost estimating, and through literature searches, Mark Goldman and Dita Peatross explored evidence based design decisions that have impacted health and behavioral outcomes for inmates/patients, as well as for staff.

MGA’s research revealed a great deal, including:

- The most therapeutic environments tend to be smaller, with eight to ten residents/patients/inmates in non-institutional, homelike (normative) settings with private rooms. This, of course, needs to be balanced with staffing and operational cost considerations.
- “Healing” (therapeutic) environments are “enriched” with color, natural light, views of nature, art; “normative” ambience; quietness; good indoor air quality; natural and full spectrum lighting; and some degree of control over one’s own environment (such as adjusting light levels).
- Campus-like plans, with buildings connected by outdoor walkways can contribute to more normative experiences and also promote physical activity, which benefits both physical and mental health.
- Environments that support staff are quiet, with natural light and views to the outside, and places to rest and “recharge.”

As more and more inmates have physical and mental health issues, MGA recommends that environment and behavior research be considered during the planning of all new correctional facilities. Some of the research findings contribute not only to the well-being, manageability and rehabilitation of inmates but also to providing environments that foster staff’s performance, job satisfaction, health, and retention.