I AM THEIR PEOPLE
ZSFG provides a mental health safety net for everyone

LOOKING FORWARD
What’s on ZSFG CEO Susan Ehrlich's list of priorities

A NIGHT FOR THE BIG-HEARTED
Transform Mental and Behavioral Health Fund launched at Hearts in SF
Everybody Needs Somebody. Kevin was making his way through the Mission when the voices in his head took control. He doesn’t remember who called 911. But he’s glad somebody did, because paramedics brought him to Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG), where doctors diagnosed bipolar disorder. And that’s where his recovery began. Kevin is not alone. And he may not be the person you expect. Mental illness can affect anyone: your brother or your neighbor, the young man sleeping on the sidewalk or the elderly woman in a wheelchair outside BART. Because Kevin could be anyone, ZSFG is here for everyone, including those who have no one to call, no couches left to surf, no shoulder to lean on. We are their people.
or hallucinations. They may be agitated or delirious, dealing with substance abuse or domestic violence," he adds. “When they come through our doors, our opportunity is to help resolve their crisis, stabilize them, and help them find a path to becoming their best selves.”

ZSFG’s approach begins with a commitment to meeting people where they are, whether they are housed, employed, and experiencing their first psychiatric crisis, or living on the street, with a history of mental illness. Services range from 24/7 psychiatric emergency treatment to inpatient care to psychosocial support, with programs geared to every niche in the San Francisco community. (Learn more about ZSFG programs at sfghf.org/tmh)

Social Medicine and Vocational Rehabilitation are just two of many programs that enable ZSFG to provide a comprehensive mental health safety net for the city. A new model of care, Social Medicine has proven transformative for people whose mental health issues are exacerbated or caused by homelessness, hunger, or isolation. Social workers, nurses, medical doctors, psychiatrists, pharmacists — all work in collaboration, along with city organizations, to provide medical care, mental health care, and support with social challenges, including shelter and food.

Once a client is stabilized, Vocational Rehabilitation can provide a path to employment, self-sufficiency, and self-worth. Participants have the chance to earn while they learn — distributing donated clothing so every discharged patient has something to wear, managing a coffee or hotdog cart on campus, working in catering or the café. The program prepares people who may have gone years without employment to join the workforce and rejoin the community.

ZSFG’s multifaceted approach to mental health confronts one of the biggest misconceptions.
ZSFG ranks as the number 1 provider of adult emergency mental health care in the city and county of San Francisco.

I’ve been part of the programs here for over 35 years. They have the best doctors. Coming here during the day we meet special people we never expected to meet. And they do wonderful things for you. — Ronald, ZSFG Patient

I think the hospital is phenomenal. What they’re doing for people who are on a limited income — it really helps motivate you and keeps you inspired.

— George, ZSFG Patient

Percentage of adults in the U.S. who experience mental health challenges in a given year

Individuals who receive vocational assessment and job training through ZSFG each year

Years ZSFG has provided a safety net for the city of San Francisco

I lived outside for so long, carrying around a 60-pound backpack. I hadn’t had employment for seven years. If I didn’t have this, I don’t think I would’ve found a paying job because of my living situation.

— Matthew, ZSFG Patient

In the early 90s, a friend suffering from AIDS was having a dementia-like emergency. At ZSFG, we were greeted with open arms and assured he would be well taken care of. At that time, people with AIDS were being shunned.

Since that moment, the hospital has held a special place in my heart.

— Charly Zukow, Foundation Supporter

We are about taking care of folks who have nowhere else to go. The commitment to our client population is what drives me and makes me feel hopeful about this work.

— Giselle Clark-Evans, Director, Emergency Department Case Management Program
about mental illness: That there’s no hope. In truth, there are treatments. There are resources. And in San Francisco, there are people who care. “Right now there’s a sense of common purpose around mental health in the city,” says Dr. Leary. “It’s so important for our patients to feel San Francisco’s support as they deal with mental illness. That support can give them a sense of hope about their recovery.”

Mental illness is a challenge that takes a toll on individual lives and on communities. And it will take a community to address it. San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, with its newly launched Transform Mental and Behavioral Health Fund, gives everyone the opportunity to make a difference on an issue that affects all of us. Discover how you can make a difference at sfghf.org/tmh.

In this newsletter, we focus on an issue of increasing importance to all San Franciscans: mental health. Although this issue is often addressed in relation to the city’s homeless population, in reality, mental health matters to all of us, because mental illness can affect any of us. ZSFG is on the front lines with innovative treatment strategies that frame mental health holistically, looking at the social, psychological, and medical needs of patients, including the most vulnerable. Once again, our city’s hospital stands out as a beacon, demonstrating how to treat people with dignity, kindness, and pioneering medical care.

The Foundation’s launch of the Transform Mental and Behavioral Health Fund rallies us to invest in people and programs that are essential to ZSFG’s mission. But mental health isn’t our only priority. With support from our community, we continue to move forward with two critical initiatives that will improve the quality and safety of care at ZSFG.

One of these is Epic, our new, comprehensive, coordinated electronic health record system, which we are working to bring online. In March, an interdisciplinary team of clinicians, coordinators, and patient advocates paved the way for Epic by testing our ability to identify the right level of care for each patient. Learnings from this exercise will enable us to integrate industry best practices at ZSFG.

Meanwhile, we’re also making progress on important upgrades to a campus building that is key to our ability to meet today’s health care needs. Planned renovations for Building 5, including a seismic retrofit, will create a patient-centered, modern, accessible ambulatory care center, conveniently co-located with Building 25, our acute care hospital and trauma center, and a planned state-of-the-art UCSF research and academic building. Key services are already moving into the modernized ambulatory care center.

These major projects, among others, will have a profound impact on ZSFG’s role as a key service provider for San Francisco. They wouldn’t be possible without the heartfelt support and generosity of San Franciscans. Thank you for caring, for investing, and for believing in San Francisco’s hospital.

Susan P. Ehrlich, MPP, MD
Chief Executive Officer, ZSFG
In January, it was my good fortune to become the Foundation’s interim executive director. I’m proud to bring my 30 years of experience to an organization strengthened by the leadership of former CEO Amanda Heier, who is pursuing new opportunities in the non-profit sector. On February 13th, I had the chance to experience Hearts in SF, the Foundation’s annual fundraiser. It was the Foundation’s most successful event ever, marked by the launch of the Transform Mental and Behavioral Health Fund and the introduction of “I Am Their People,” a campaign to humanize mental illness and illustrate ZSFG’s commitment to those who have run out of people, resources, and often hope. I was deeply moved by the urgency of the challenge and by the compassionate, innovative, inclusive spirit of our community. I look forward to my work at the Foundation, in partnership with people who care so much about the role our city hospital plays for their fellow San Franciscans.

Ann Lazarus
Interim Executive Director,
SFGHF

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• Make a gift today using the enclosed form or online: sfghf.org/donate

• Deepen your impact with monthly gifts. Go online to join our Heartbeat Club: sfghf.org/monthly

• Sustain ZSFG’s mission with a legacy gift from your will or trust. Visit sfghf.org/legacy to learn more.

• Stay in touch through our Foundation website, social media, and newsletters. Visit sfghf.org to learn more.

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Perspective from new Foundation leadership

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YES, I WILL BE THEIR PEOPLE.