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CA Department of Developmental Services
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The California
Memorial Project

THE CALIFORNIA MEMORIAL PROJECT

History

From the mid 1880s to the 1960s, more than 45,000 people passed away while living in a state institution. Their remains are for the most part unmarked, in mass gravesites, where numbered markers long ago disappeared.

In 2001 and 2006, then Senator Wesley Chesbro introduced legislation (SB 1448; SB 258) to establish the California Memorial Project (CMP) and expand its purpose. The combined intent of the two pieces of legislation was to:

- Identify the location of all gravesites at existing state hospitals and developmental centers;
- Identify the names of the patients whose remains were donated for medical research, and the entity which the remains were donated;
- Work with the Department of Mental Health and other state agencies to research the records of deaths and burials at cemeteries located on state hospital and developmental center grounds; and
- Develop a plan for the restoration of such cemeteries and gravesites at the locations identified.

About The California Memorial Project

The mission of CMP is to honor and restore dignity to those individuals who lived and died in state hospitals and institutions. Its goals include the restoration of cemeteries

or graves where individuals from state institutions are buried, and preserving the histories of individuals who lived in state institutions

Interesting Facts

- At Park View in Manteca, there are 2,284 cremated remains of people who died at Modesto State Hospital and Stockton State Hospital.
- Metropolitan State Hospital interred many individuals who had received treatment within the facility. Their remains were relocated to nearby area cemeteries in the early 1980s.
- Approximately 4,368 people were buried from 1875-1924 at Napa State Hospital.
- An estimated 2,024 people were buried from 1893-1934 at Patton State Hospital.
- 1,418 people are buried in a cemetery located in a field on the campus of Sonoma Developmental Center.

California Memorial Project Partner Information

For more information regarding the California Memorial Project please contact one of the following organizations:

- [CA Network of Mental Health Clients](#)
(916) 443-3232
- [Disability Rights California](#)
(916) 488-7787
- [People First California](#)
(760) 945-7663