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#### **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center Opens New Sensory Room, Providing Vulnerable Clients with Innovative, Client-Centered Care**

*With a \$45,000 grant from the Robert Ellis Simon Foundation, Gateways now applies innovative, client-centered methods that combine the best practices of inpatient psychiatric care.*

LOS ANGELES, CA – March 1, 2024 – Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center opened its new Sensory Room, one of the first available for acute patients in Los Angeles. Made possible through a donation from the Robert Ellis Simon Foundation, the introduction of the sensory room enables the safety-net hospital to implement innovative methods of care tailored to each client receiving acute inpatient psychiatric care. According to studies conducted by [OT-Innovations](#), these best practices include immersive sensory-based interventions, integrating meaningful activities, and fostering connections with both caregivers and peers.

Sensory rooms are a multisensory experience that are designed to accommodate every client, giving them greater control over their needs. Gateways' sensory room will be used by adolescent and adult clients receiving inpatient care under supervision from trained mental healthcare providers. The room will enable patients to develop their emotional regulation skills and learn coping mechanisms, according to [Advances in Mental Health, Volume 12](#).

"Gateways is committed to prioritizing resources that center our clients' overall well-being. The sensory room's innovative experience enhances our clients' treatment options by providing an engaging, safe space for clients to regulate their emotions," said Colleen Carroll, Occupational Therapy Director at Gateways Mental Health Center and Hospital. "I am proud to offer this type of care because clients who work in these rooms often feel a greater sense of self-esteem, self-management and self-determination, and feel empowered to develop meaningful coping strategies, as demonstrated by numerous peer-reviewed studies."

Gateways' trained mental health providers will guide clients through the sensory room, allowing each client to have a unique experience in the sensory room with the ability to adjust the lighting, sound, and tactile regulation of the space. In doing so, clients will have more autonomy over their care, which is proven to reduce feelings of anxiety, distress, and agitation, according to [Australian Psychiatry: Bulletin of the Royal Australian College of Psychiatrists](#).

Making Gateways' Sensory Room possible, the Robert Ellis Simon Foundation donated \$45,000 to help the nonprofit hospital provide additional methods of care that are client-centered. The Robert Ellis Simon Foundation supports expansive mental health resources for the most vulnerable communities in

Los Angeles County. The foundation has served residents for over 50 years, and with the rising mental health crisis after the pandemic, has specifically allocated funding for organizations that provide accessible care to the community they serve.

“To bring mental health resources closer to the residents in Los Angeles County, our foundation works with community organizations and agencies that provide care and conduct research,” said Edina Lekovic, Executive Director of the Robert Ellis Simon Foundation. “We are proud to support the sensory room project to equip clients with a tailored mental health care experience, and we are excited to see how Gateways will expand these projects to enhance mental health care accessibility for the most vulnerable clients.”

“At Gateways, we believe in the value of personalized care. This grant from the Robert Ellis Simon Foundation allows us to create a sensory room on our main campus and continue to challenge the traditional perception of acute mental health care by providing a safe, engaging experience,” said Dr. Phil Wong, Chief Executive Officer of Gateways Hospital. “As an increasing number of hospitals strive to implement effective treatment methods that empower patients, Gateways' sensory room sets a new, patient-centered standard for care.”

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**About Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center:** [Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center](https://www.gatewayshospital.org) is a non-profit organization located in Echo Park that has been serving the Greater Los Angeles area since 1953. Gateways offers an array of comprehensive mental and behavioral health services for adolescents, transitional-aged youth, and adults. For more information, visit [gatewayshospital.org](https://www.gatewayshospital.org) or call (323) 644-2000.