

Probe: Nev. mental hospital regularly released homeless patients

By Phillip Reese and Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

Some of them heard voices and saw imaginary people. Some talked of killing themselves by jumping off a building or walking in front of a bus. They suffered from afflictions ranging from cocaine addiction to schizoaffective disorder, and most were homeless and without medical insurance.

About 40 percent of the mental patients whose charts were reviewed recently by a federal agency were discharged from Nevada's primary psychiatric facility to homeless shelters in Las Vegas or destinations across the country without evidence of proper planning for their continuing care.

The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services assessed a sample group of 41 charts for patients at Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital in Las Vegas and found that in 16 cases, patients were discharged without evidence the hospital had made even basic arrangements for their shelter, support or follow-up care.

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