



Silver Hill Hospital

Helping Patients and Families



Helping Patients and Families In Every Phase of Illness and Recovery

Silver Hill Hospital is embarking on a campaign to raise \$6 million to build a new admissions building, [The Center for Evaluation](#), and launch a new initiative, the [Family Resource Program](#).

We hope you will contribute generously to this campaign and help us fulfill Silver Hill's mission and our promise to you: to support *“our patients and their families in every phase of illness and recovery.”*



Helping Patients and Families

In Every Phase of Illness and Recovery

Former patients, their families and supporters of Silver Hill Hospital know we provide the most sensitive and effective treatments possible for mental illness and addiction. For 86 years, we have set people on the path to recovery and helped them manage, resume and renew their lives.

We have achieved this by striving continually to improve the care we offer and the environment in which we provide it, and we are determined, with your support, to do better still. In an era when economic pressures are reducing the number of independent, nonprofit psychiatric hospitals and driving the treatment of mental illness and addiction toward ever briefer and less personalized engagement, Silver Hill is bucking the trend and boldly **extending and expanding the quality and continuity of care** we provide.

We want to offer more and better services at two particularly stressful stages on the journey to recovery: when patients enter Silver Hill, and after they leave. And at both of these critical junctures we want to do a better job of serving patients' families as they help spouses, children or parents reclaim their lives. **The Center for Evaluation**, a new and vastly improved entry for admissions, and **The Family Resource Program**, an innovative initiative supporting families indefinitely after discharge, will “bookend” what patients and their families need and expect from Silver Hill and, we believe, enhance the outcomes of the treatments we provide.



The Center for Evaluation

A Critical Encounter

Crossing the threshold of a psychiatric hospital can be a harrowing experience under even the best of circumstances. Nobody *wants* to be there.

Patients and families who arrive at Silver Hill are frequently distraught and frightened. We are often, after failed treatment elsewhere, their last resort. A patient may be delusional or intoxicated. He or she may face involuntary commitment and only now realize and resist it. A patient may be in an emotional turmoil, or a family in tears.

At this first encounter *it is critical to ease the tension, calm patients and their families, and respect their dignity and privacy*. Even Silver Hill's extraordinarily committed and caring staff has a hard time doing this within the cramped confines of the current admissions center, which was originally a private home and repurposed in 2004.

Silver Hill admits roughly 2,300 patients a year, an average of eight daily, mostly during the afternoon and early evening. Yet the admissions center can accommodate comfortably only two patients and their families at a time. Sometimes as many as four patients with different problems are there at once: a teenage son, defiant and angry; a brother hearing voices, grappling with schizophrenia; a wife struggling with disabling depression after delivering a child; an elderly parent struggling with dementia. They and their families are crowded into a single area where they can easily

*What a difference
to know Silver Hill
will be available for
us as a family if we
need them.*

agitate or frighten each other, with no place to talk privately, make a phone call or cry alone. The layout adds to the anxiety when patients are taken away from their families to separate examination rooms to be interviewed or examined by nurses and psychiatrists.

A Springboard to Recovery

The Center for Evaluation, built on the site of the current admissions facility, will provide architectural solutions to these physical shortcomings. The two-story shingled building was designed by Richard Turlington, the architect responsible for the renovation—“transformation” describes his work more accurately—of the rest of the Silver Hill campus, which recently received its fourth award from the New Canaan Preservation Alliance.

Patients and their families will enter the building through a courtyard whose attractive garden and fountain will create an inviting first impression and set the tone for their entire experience at Silver Hill. The new facility’s 4,000 square feet will more than double the current building’s 1,800 square feet and contain private sitting rooms for three and, in a pinch, four families and the family member being admitted, who will remain together as a unit throughout the admission process. Each sitting room will be connected to an adjacent examination room where an admitting social worker, nurse and psychiatrist can interview the patient and easily call on the family to provide additional information when necessary. Two of the sitting rooms will also have

*Thank you
Silver Hill for
not being afraid
of providing more
“hand holding.”*

doors opening on the courtyard, where patients and families can enjoy more privacy and a breath of fresh air, and find some solace in the serene surroundings.

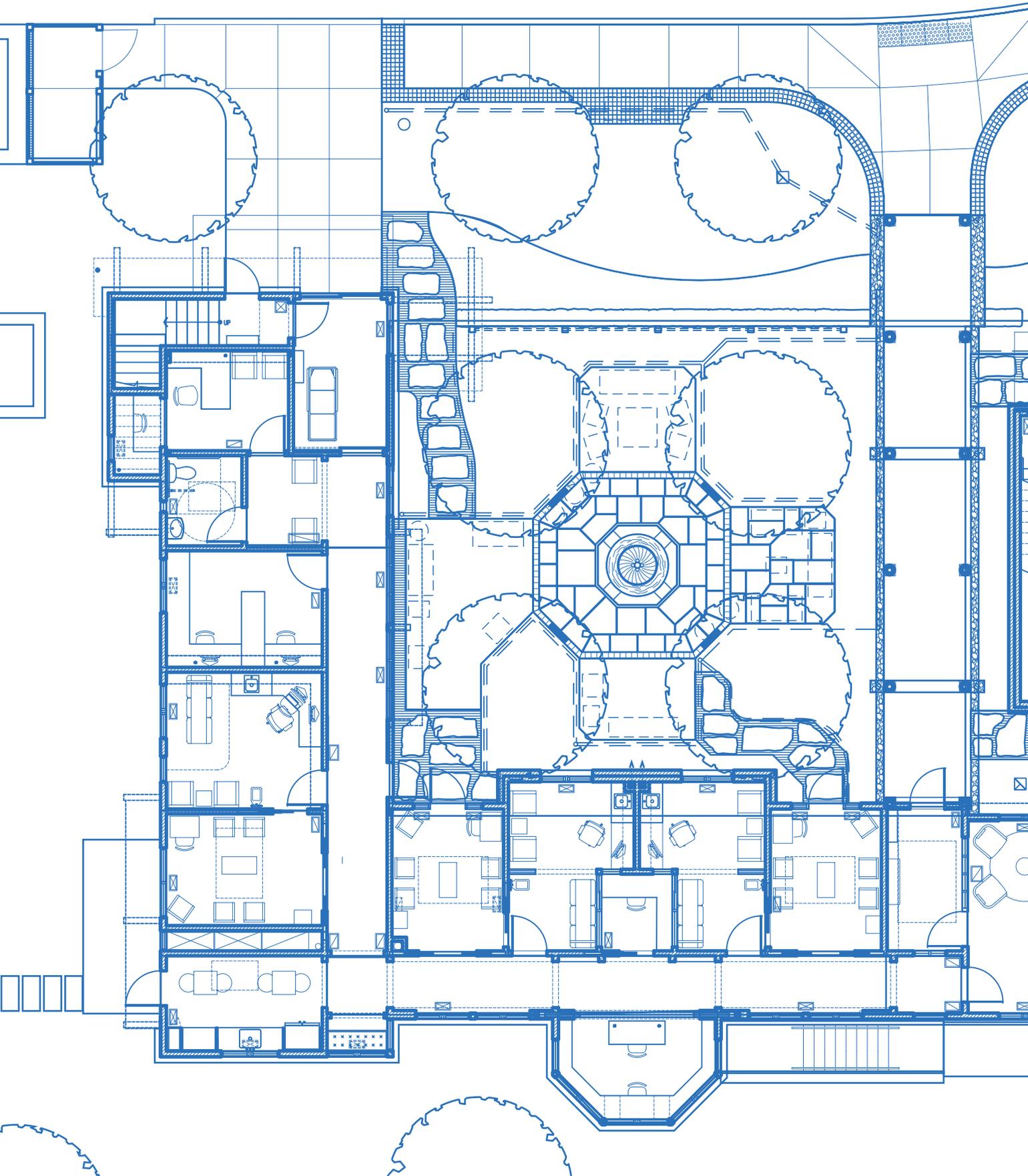
The Center for Evaluation will also improve the efficiency of the admission process by housing the patient accounts office and laboratory space (for blood work, drug tests, etc.), which are part of the process but now quartered elsewhere. The new center will shorten dramatically the time it takes to be admitted to Silver Hill, which now averages three hours. A thorough history and physical examination are essential to determining the most effective treatment and ensuring the safety of the patient and of others, but the welcoming environment of the spacious new building, its respect for the dignity and privacy of patients and their families, and the streamlined processes will not only reduce the time that admission to Silver Hill takes but make that time pass less stressfully.

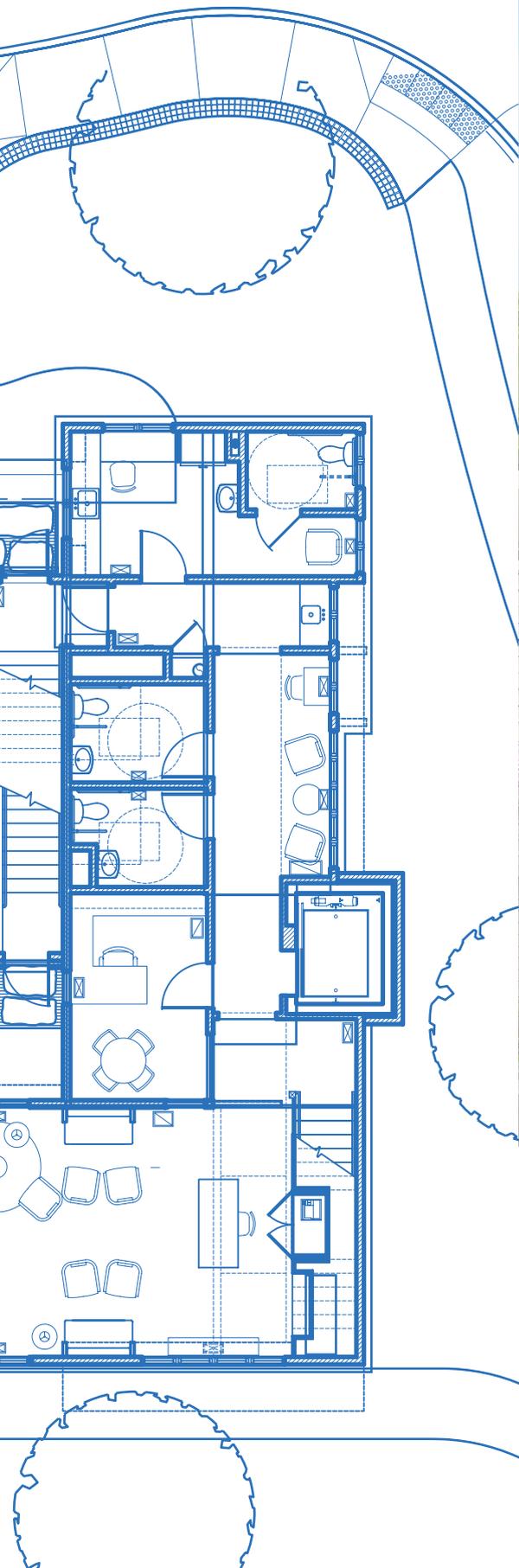
One of the most important factors contributing to the success of psychiatric treatment is how it begins—the first impressions and beginning of the therapeutic alliance with the hospital. [How a patient is treated at the outset can affect the entire course and results of his or her treatment at Silver Hill.](#) Opening the door to successful treatment at Silver Hill, The Center for Evaluation will be a springboard to recovery.





The Garden Courtyard







The Center for Evaluation

The Center for Evaluation is vitally important not only to the successful treatment of patients, but also to the long-term financial viability of Silver Hill, which must continue to attract and satisfy patients and their families. The new building will extend to them a warm welcome and foster a reassuring sense that they have come to the right place.

The Family Resource Program

A Patient's Greatest Resource

Silver Hill Hospital discharges an average of 200 patients a month. Even with a careful discharge plan at the time of discharge, the challenges they and their families face aren't over. *Mental illness and addiction are seldom cured completely; more frequently patients remain at risk for a relapse or experience residual symptoms requiring ongoing treatment.* Such illnesses can raise a host of problems that families are often called on to address but unprepared to resolve.

What are appropriate treatment centers for a patient's eating disorder or substance abuse now that she or he no longer needs Silver Hill's inpatient or residential care? Which programs will take the patient's or the family's insurance? What high school or college is best-equipped to understand a student's special needs? What changes when a juvenile patient reaches the age of consent? How does a family set up a trust for a troubled family member? Apply for disability benefits under Social Security? If a patient suffers a relapse requiring hospitalization, what are the laws and procedures for voluntary and involuntary commitment?



Issues such as these can easily overwhelm a family and hinder it from ensuring a family member receives the support he or she needs to get back on track. Because their family is the greatest resource most patients have, Silver Hill is launching the Family Resource Program to partner with families, helping them to understand a loved one's illness and what they can do to help him or her manage it. This partnership will endure for as long as a family needs us.

Support in Person and Online

Patients and their families develop strong bonds with Silver Hill during treatment. While a patient is with us we offer their families many services, such as support and education groups, but these cease with discharge. The Family Resource Program will extend and strengthen Silver Hill's family ties. A specially trained and clinically licensed social worker will confer with and get to know a family before a patient's discharge, contact and consult with the family periodically over the next six months to a year, and remain available indefinitely thereafter.

Families will also be able to take advantage of a dedicated, password-protected Family Portal on our website. This portal will provide access to a vast database of resources, to Silver Hill's library, and to blogs, a bulletin board and affinity groups so families can ask questions, receive answers, exchange information, share their experiences, and compare notes. *One staff psychiatrist likens the portal to "a Facebook for mental health recovery."*

*Families are grateful
to know Silver Hill
wasn't just a way
station but that they
are our partner for
the long term.*

Together, the Family Resource Program's social workers and portal will help families navigate the medical, legal, financial, educational, entitlement and other complexities of caring for a loved one and ensuring that he or she is on course to recovery.

As the Family Resource Program ramps up, we plan to invite families back to Silver Hill for annual or semi-annual retreats offering peer-to-peer support groups, expert panels, and other interactive programs.

Our Mission

The mission of Silver Hill Hospital is to provide our patients with the best available treatment of mental illness and addiction; and to offer continuing support, counseling and education to our patients and their families in every phase of illness and recovery.

Our Vision

The vision of Silver Hill Hospital is to establish a helpful, lasting relationship with each of our patients, their families and their clinicians in the community and to remain involved in each patient's care for as long as we are asked. We will educate clinicians, patients, their families and members of the community about the nature and treatment of psychiatric disorders and addictions. We will strive to advance the frontier of our field through continued scholarship.

All artworks are from our patient quarterly art journal, *The Silver Lining*

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