

**PILGRIM STATE HOSPITAL
BRENTWOOD, LONG ISLAND, NY.**

“History - In 1927, New York Governor Alfred Smith, with public support, pressed the legislature to appropriate money to obtain a minimum of 10,000 beds needed to relieve overcrowding and treat the increasing numbers of people who would need treatment in a mental institution.

Such a big hospital had to be located out in the country where land was cheap. It had to be as nearly complete and self-sufficient as possible, generating its own electricity, pumping its own water and growing some of its food. One thousand acres in Brentwood was chosen for this to be another farm colony.

Pilgrim State Hospital was created by the Legislature in 1929 and named for Dr. Charles W. Pilgrim, Commissioner of Mental Health in the early 1900s. The hospital officially opened for the care and treatment of patients on 825 acres with 100 patients transferred from Central Islip State Hospital on October 1, 1931. Nine months later, 2,018 patients were hospitalized at Pilgrim. The census rose to its peak in 1954, with 13,875 patients.

Pilgrim was the largest facility of its kind in the world when it was built. The hospital community was independent in that it had its own water works, electric light plant, heating plant, sewage system, fire department, police department, courts, church, post office, cemetery, laundry, store, amusement hall, athletic fields, greenhouses, and farm.

Over time, as increasing numbers of patients were able to be discharged and greater support and services became available in the community, the need for such large facilities to treat the mentally ill was diminished. Following the trend, Kings Park Psychiatric Center and Central Islip Psychiatric Center were consolidated and relocated to the Pilgrim campus in the Fall of 1996. The following Fall, those facilities were merged into Pilgrim Psychiatric Center under one name. Today, Pilgrim reflects the history and best practices for care and treatment of all three facilities and has become a modern health care delivery system serving the mentally ill adults of Long Island.”

<http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/facilities/pgpc/facility.htm#history>