Incurables to COVID-19: The Evolution of Cedars-Sinai as a Modern Hospital

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Course Description
Today Cedars-Sinai is a top tier hospital and academic medical center. But this was not always the case; the institution had much humbler beginnings in early twentieth-century Los Angeles as a care home for the “incurable.” And the medical modernity Cedars-Sinai now represents—including the hospital’s primacy as a site of patient care—is only about as old the institution itself. This course will explore the history of Cedars-Sinai, and of hospitals more generally, to understand how the institution and the patient care it provides came to be what it is today. In addition, it will examine how Cedars-Sinai has shaped the history of hospital-based care in the United States. Finally, this course will use knowledge about the past to contemplate the future of Cedars-Sinai in the post-COVID-19 era.

Learning Objectives
1. Identify the historical factors that shaped the development of Cedars-Sinai
2. Explain how Cedars-Sinai shaped the history of hospitals and hospital-based care in the U.S.
3. Understand contemporary hospital organization and practice through the lens of the past

Course Calendar

Week 1: From Incurables in Crisis to COVID-19—An Introduction to Cedars-Sinai
Readings: Selections from the Cedars-Sinai Archives; Caroline Luce, “Mt. Sinai Hospital and Clinic: The Bikur Cholim Society” and “Cedars-Sinai Medical Center”

Week 2: Hospitals in Historical Perspective

Week 3: Caring for the Los Angeles Community: Cedars-Sinai as a Non-Profit Hospital
Readings: Selections from C. Rosenberg, The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America’s Hospital System

Week 4: Producing Medical Knowledge: Cedars-Sinai as an Academic Medical Center
Readings: Selections from J. S. Billings, “The Plans and Purposes of the Johns Hopkins Hospital,“

Week 5: Innovating Care: Cedars-Sinai and New Technologies in the Hospital

Week 6: Looking to the Future: Cedars-Sinai in the COVID-19 Era and Beyond
Readings: Selections from the Cedars-Sinai Archives