

FEMA Awards Over \$122 Million to the Forensic Psychiatry Hospital in Ponce

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Guaynabo, PUERTO RICO — The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) obligated over \$122 million to the Mental Health and Addiction Services Administration (ASSMCA, in Spanish) to repair the Forensic Psychiatry Hospital in Ponce, a mental health center that provides medical-legal evaluation to people with mental disorders who have been intervened by the Puerto Rico criminal justice system.

“This hospital is vital in the evaluation of people with mental health conditions, and it is essential that it operates in optimal conditions to provide adequate care. With this funding allocation, FEMA reaffirms its commitment to the recovery of specialized facilities that provide essential services to mental health patients,” said FEMA Infrastructure Division Director Al Gómez Rivera.

The Forensic Psychiatry Hospital in Ponce treats people with possible mental disorders who are facing criminal proceedings and whose competence — that is, their ability to understand the proceedings against them and cooperate with their defense — must be determined by a doctor specializing in psychiatry. The Forensic Psychiatry Hospital in Ponce is the only one in Puerto Rico with an area exclusively for women.

ASSMCA has two facilities available in Puerto Rico to provide treatment and housing for mental health patients facing or awaiting judicial proceedings. These are the Forensic Psychiatry Hospital in Río Piedras, with capacity for about 100 male patients; and the Forensic Psychiatry Hospital in Ponce, the largest on the Island, with a capacity of 125 spaces, of which 26 are for women and 99 for men. The minimum age for admission is 18 years old.

To ensure the well-being of patients, it is vital for the hospital to have backup systems for essential drinking water and electricity services. To that end, FEMA included among the hospital’s repairs the provision of a potable water cistern and a power generator, in addition to installing an alternate power system. The



construction project includes phases that have already been completed, such as the building's electrical infrastructure, lighting, security gates and air conditioning systems.

The provision of Section 20601 of the 2018 Bipartisan Budget Act, which applies to Puerto Rico, allowed FEMA to maximize federal assistance through the Public Assistance program.

In addition to allocating funds to repair infrastructure damaged by Hurricane María, FEMA approved over \$8 million for mitigation measures to protect the structure against similar damage. This includes installing a photovoltaic system to prevent damage caused by overloads and power fluctuations. The building's doors and windows will also be reinforced with storm shutters, anchors and systems that protect the infrastructure from rainwater infiltration and hurricane-force winds.

FEMA has obligated over \$34.5 billion for nearly 11,060 projects for Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane María. Over \$431.2 million of these funds are for 12 permanent construction projects for facilities administered by ASSMCA.

For more information about Puerto Rico's recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339, fema.gov/disaster/4473 and recovery.pr. Follow us on our social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and [Twitter @COR3pr](https://Twitter.com/COR3pr).

