

# Closing the State Mental Hospitals

by **Thomas J. Scheff** (September 2012)

This is the story of my studies of mental hospitals. My first was Stockton State Hospital, in northern California. My involvement began when I was still a graduate student in sociology at UC Berkeley. The Department of Mental Hygiene in Sacramento made available several six-month fellowships to study mental hospitals. I was chosen to be one of Fellows, and, in turn, I chose to study Stockton State, beginning August 1, 1958. This study was the basis for my Ph.D dissertation. As it turned out, the study raised questions for me that I was able to examine more fully in the research I did on the Wisconsin mental hospital system, to be described in a later essay.