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NAMI Santa Clara County

June 2021



**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NEWS**

## Diversion Law Offers Alternative to Jail, but Funding for Supportive Services Is Needed

By Moryt Milo

Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge **Stephen Manley** is a risk taker, and like most risk takers he bucked the norm in 1994 when he founded one of the first drug treatment courts in the nation. Four years later, when individuals sent to his court for drug treatment also had a mental health condition and were not permitted into the program, he followed up with the first behavioral health court in the country.

Then, in 2019 Judge Manley received a new set of tools to help treat the mentally ill with the passage of California Assembly Bill 1810. The law provides a pathway for individuals with underlying mental health conditions, to be diverted away from the jails, prisons, and state hospitals into community-based mental health programs. Upon successful program completion, charges are dismissed.

"This program is a really novel & different approach because it avoids the criminal justice system to the greatest extent possible," Judge Manley said. "You must

already be in the system but you can be diverted out of the system on two levels."

Individuals qualify for either Track 1 or Track 2 diversion, as long as they have not committed a violent crime or been convicted. In all cases, mental illness must be the underlying issue that causes the individual to commit the offense. Other requirements include 1) the disorder must respond to treatment; 2) there is no reasonable risk to being treated in the community; and 3) the individual agrees to meet all treatment criteria.

Track 1 applies to those with misdemeanor charges. Track 2 applies to those charged with a felony and deemed incompetent to stand trial. The objective in both tracks is to divert individuals into the community and out of the jails. In the case of Track 2, it is also to divert individuals from state hospitals into community-based treatment.

**Gabby Olivarez**, Division Director of the Criminal Justice System, Behavioral Health Services Department for Santa

Clara County, works closely with Judge Manley's Behavioral Health Court and the diversion program. In the law's brief history Olivarez has seen significant results in the Track 2 program. "I've seen a 92% reduction in individuals going to state hospitals, and a 54% reduction in recidivism," she said.

However, funding is constrained, and without critical dollars to build out community programs to combat drug addiction, essential services, and housing for the mentally ill, the program cannot reach its full potential. "In my view, it is one of the most successful programs we have," the Judge said.

"If we don't keep trying, we won't get anywhere. There is always hope."

*To read the full article about the criminal justice system's diversion program, go to <https://namisantaclara.org/nami-santa-clara-blogs/>*

## SCC Board of Supervisors Votes to Opt In to AOT

The County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday, May 25, to opt in to Laura's Law and begin creating an assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) program that legally requires individuals struggling with severe mental illness to comply with treatment.

New legislation, AB 1976, requires counties to formally opt in or opt out by June 30. To date, only 21 of California's 58 counties have opted into the program, according to the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards & Commissions.

Development of the countywide assisted outpatient treatment program will begin in the fall.

Health officials estimate the program could serve between 20-50 people annually, based on an analysis of surrounding counties with similar programs, including San Mateo and San Francisco counties. Wherever implemented in California, the AOT program has shown widespread success in providing needed treatment, reducing hospitalizations, homelessness, and incarceration, and with significant cost savings.

# NAMI National Convention (NAMICon): July 27-28



The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on mental health.

The road to recovery will require the mental health community coming together to ignite powerful conversations, develop and

discover solutions, and drive awareness—and that Time Is Now at Virtual NAMICon 2021 (July 27-28, 2021).

NAMICon is the largest community gathering of mental health advocates in the U.S. It's an incredible value at **\$10** for students and peers, **\$15** for NAMI members, and **\$25** for nonmembers.

All the timely and informative content is focused on research, youth and young adults, mental health conditions, community support systems, and addressing mental health disparities.

For more information about the convention and registration, go to [www.nami.org/convention](http://www.nami.org/convention)

## Judge Manley Lauds Virtual Hearings

By Moryt Milo



When the pandemic forced court hearings onto virtual platforms, SCC Superior Court Judge **Stephen Manley** took his Behavioral Health Court hearings to the “client” (the Judge doesn’t refer to individuals as defendants.) Judge Manley met his clients virtually in their environments—in residential treatment facilities, homes, riding a bicycle, or in a grandmother’s

car—to better understand their lives and challenges.

“It has been a really great experience and here to stay,” Judge Manley said.

During these remote hearings, the Judge appears in his robe and mask to encourage individuals to follow proper protocols. Another benefit has been minimizing the psychological impact. Coming to court can be frightening and traumatic. “Judges are scary. They can throw you in jail. You are in a setting with deputies and sheriffs,” Judge Manley said. “The advantage of a remote hearing is that the individual can be more open with you.”

The setting feels safer. The conversation is just between the individual and the judge versus a courtroom where 30-70 people are listening. The judge can also check in sooner with individuals and get a better sense of how the person is doing. When the individual knows he can speak to the Judge directly about challenges and difficulties and receives encouragement immediately upon entering treatment, outcomes improve.

“I think it’s been a real boon for us. It has really helped us be more effective,” he said.

“So many of the mentally ill are convinced they are losers and will be caught up in the criminal justice system for the rest of their lives,” Judge Manley said. He upends that notion, encouraging the person to look for a job or consider going back to school. He wants to be an ally not an adversary.

“If we don’t meet people where they are, we tend to make everything a one-size-fits-all model and that doesn’t work.... Everyone is an individual. Everyone is different,” he said.

## General Meeting News

### Summary of May 11 General Meeting “Celebrating Faith & Spirituality in Mental Health Recovery”

On May 11 our FaithNet team presented an inspirational program. They began by talking about NAMI-Santa Clara County’s involvement in FaithNet. How they started by inviting faith leaders to lunch and introducing them to NAMI. In 2019 FaithNet was given an Innovation Grant by the County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services Department (MHSA funds). This allowed for the expansion of FaithNet. Teams from different cultures were formed and reached out to many faith communities.

The evening was a celebration of faith communities in Santa Clara County that actively want to do more to support people. Twenty congregations were introduced and recognized as “Mental Health Friendly/Stigma-Free Congregations.” The extraordinary work that these congregations are doing was highlighted.

Additionally, individuals for whom spirituality is a cornerstone of their wellness and recovery told their stories, and faith leaders also spoke.

**NOTE:** You can watch this presentation as well as past ones by going to our YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/fFg5aSR-juU>

### Upcoming June 8 General Meeting “Housing That Heals”

Our June speakers, **Teresa Pasquini & Lauren Rettagliata**, will present their “Housing That Heals” story—a call to action that encourages local, state, and federal policy makers and community partners to think beyond the Housing First model and focus first on building a continuum of care for those who live with serious mental illnesses. Housing That Heals is a prevention and intervention plan that will help flatten the harm curve by providing the right care at the right time in the right place. Teresa and Lauren partnered on the project after leaving the Contra Costa Mental Health Commission where they both served for many years. Because of their shared passion, in 2019 they took a road trip across California in search of quality, affordable housing solutions for people living with serious mental illnesses.

Teresa Pasquini is a California mom on a mission for reforming local, state, and national mental health systems. On the Contra Costa County Mental Health Commission, she was an outspoken champion for the most vulnerable and often forgotten SMI population. Lauren Rettagliata is also a California mom on a mission with a passion for housing vulnerable populations. She has a long-time history with nonprofit housing in a number of states. Both women are long-time members of NAMI Contra Costa County.

# NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2021

By Kyle Galimba, NAMIWalks Manager



**Kick-Off Event:** Do you remember last year's Kick-Off Event in August? We met at NAMI-Santa Clara County's office and handed out food, goody bags, and offered entertainment via YouTube! This event is back again on **June 5th!** Help us officially launch the NAMIWalks season by visiting our office from **11 A.M.-12 P.M.** We will *not* be handing out lunches. Instead, we'll hand out \$15 gift cards for Starbucks or Subway. If you do not want a gift card, we'll donate that amount to Feeding America!

To RSVP and choose your meal preference, please visit this website (the form to fill out is at the bottom of the page):  
<https://namisantaclara.org/2021/05/june-5th-2021-kick-off-event-namiwalks-silicon-valley-2021/>



## NAMIWalks Is Up & Running:

The wait is over! We're excited to announce NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2021! We've already raised almost \$50,000 for resources and programs to help people and families affected by mental health

issues. To register, donate, and find more information, visit [www.namiwalks.org/events/siliconvalley](http://www.namiwalks.org/events/siliconvalley) Under the resource tab, find documents that teach you how to register, how to fundraise online, how to connect your Walk fundraiser to Facebook, and more! You can also meet our three **Honorary Chairs** this year: Congressman **Ro Khanna**, Senator **Dave Cortese**, and **Dr. Sara Cody** who represent the federal, state, and local governments, respectively. Finally, you'll find our **Virtual Sponsor Fair**, where you can find info and links to our Walk Sponsors. If you own or know a company that would like to sponsor NAMIWalks, contact **Kyle** at [kgalimba@namisantaclara.org](mailto:kgalimba@namisantaclara.org)

**Volunteers:** Do you want to help us with NAMIWalks Silicon Valley 2021 and volunteer? Would you like to donate to or sponsor the event? For information, please contact **Kyle** at [kgalimba@namisantaclara.org](mailto:kgalimba@namisantaclara.org) or go to [www.namiwalks.org/events/siliconvalley](http://www.namiwalks.org/events/siliconvalley)

**New Fundraising Tool Called Classy:** NAMIWalks Silicon Valley is NAMI-SCC's biggest fundraiser of the year, but not the only one. Do you remember the Online Silent Auction last year or the dinner events years before? Now, you can find all of NAMI-SCC's fundraisers year-round thanks to Classy. Classy is a new tool to organize our fundraisers and ultimately make it easier for you, the community member who wants to support mental wellness the best way they can! With Classy, you can join our fundraisers, start your own, stay up-to-date on how we are making an impact in our community, and so much more. Get involved with mental health advocacy and NAMI-SCC! Please look for updates on our website: [www.namisantaclara.org](http://www.namisantaclara.org)

## Volunteer Opportunity at NAMI-SCC

NAMI-SCC relies heavily on volunteers to maintain our programs and services. Currently we are looking to fill the volunteer position of Website Intern.

The Website Intern will assist in making updates on the website and work with the web team to ensure that the website is up to date.

For complete information about this position, please go to <https://namisantaclara.org/about-nami/jobs-2/>

## NAMI-SCC Legislative Updates

By Frank Alioto

### SB 224: Mandatory Mental Health Education in California Public Schools

SB 224 is authored by California State Senator **Anthony Portantino** and co-authored by several other legislators including Santa Clara District 25 State Senator **Dave Cortese**.

Education that includes medically accurate evidence-based research and culturally responsive practices are proven to help overcome mental health challenges, improve academic performance, and reduce stigma.

If approved by the California Legislature and signed into law by the Governor, SB 224 will require that California school students, grades K-12, receive comprehensive Mental Health Education from a qualified mental health instructor at least once during elementary school, once during middle school or junior high, and once during high school. The instruction would address, in an age-appropriate way, overarching themes and core principles of mental health.

The bill would also require that instruction and related materials be appropriate for use with pupils of all races, genders, sexual orientations, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds, pupils with disabilities, and English learners.

SB 224 is moving through the legislative process step by step.



### Governor Newsom Proposes Historic \$12 Billion Package to End Homelessness in California

Governor Gavin Newsom has proposed a \$12 billion increase for homeless housing in California. This is, by far, the largest such increase for homeless housing in California's history.

The planned expenditure will be made over the next two years. The funds are made possible by the \$100 billion California budget surplus.

The Governor's plan calls for the creation of over 46,000 new housing units, helping hundreds of thousands of Californians, and includes 28,000 new beds and placements for those with behavioral health challenges and seniors in need. The plan will provide over 65,000 people with housing placements and over 300,000 people with housing security. The new program is designed to build on the recent successes of the California Home Key project and will focus on those with the most acute needs.

The Governor is also proposing an additional \$1.5 billion investment to clean public spaces near highways and transform public spaces through arts and cultural projects. The initiative is expected to create an estimated 15,000 jobs, including for people experiencing or exiting homelessness, at-risk youth, veterans, and formerly incarcerated individuals.



# Lived Experience Advisory Board

By Lorraine Zeller

Interested in learning, brainstorming, and speaking in support of recovery-based behavioral health services? We are seeking members with current or past experience as clients of public behavioral health services in Santa Clara County who are willing to learn about and evaluate the system of care in order to effectively advocate for improvement. The purpose of this group is based on the concept of Empowerment which is defined by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) as follows:

*Consumers have the authority to choose from a range of options and to participate in all decisions—including allocation of resources—that will affect their lives and are educated and supported in doing so. They have the ability to join with other consumers to collectively and effectively speak for themselves about their needs, wants, desires, and aspirations. Through empowerment, an individual gains control of their own destiny and influences the organizational and societal structures in their life.*

In order to be considered for membership, please contact **Lorraine Zeller** at [ljz1496@gmail.com](mailto:ljz1496@gmail.com) or 408-679-9293 (text first)



Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders in youth. This 6-hour training gives adults who work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to adolescents (ages 6-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

**Who should take the course?** Teachers, School Staff, Coaches, Camp counselors, Youth Group Leaders, Parents, People who work with youth

**What does the course cover?** Common signs and symptoms of mental illness in this age group; common signs and symptoms of substance abuse; expanded content on trauma, addiction, self-care, and the impact of social media and bullying.

There are three learning options: virtual, in-person, and blended learning (a combination of virtual and in-person). Training will be held on the following days/times via Zoom:

**Friday, June 18, 25, July 9, 23 ~ 9 A.M.-4 P.M.**

To be registered for a training course, you must be 18 years of age or older. Please email [LMena@MomentumMH.org](mailto:LMena@MomentumMH.org) with your name/email/phone number/training date you would like to attend. There is no charge for this training. To learn more about Mental Health First Aid, visit [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)

## MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

Join, renew, and/or donate to NAMI-SCC

I would like to join:

☐ Individual (\$40)

☐ Household (\$60)

☐ Open Door (\$5)

☐ New Membership

☐ Renewal Membership

☐ My company has a Matching Gift Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

To pay online, go to [www.namisanclaara.org](http://www.namisanclaara.org) and click on "Join NAMI."

Learn how to include NAMI-SCC in your estate plan by going to "Get Involved/Planned Giving" on our website.

NAMI-SCC welcomes your membership. Memberships are valid for one year. Part of the membership dues enrolls you at NAMI State and NAMI National, which in turn automatically registers you as a member at all levels. Your additional donation helps ensure that we are able to maintain our office, as well as our educational programs. Your membership and donations are tax deductible. **Tax ID #94-2430956**

I would like to donate:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250

Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In Honor of: ☐ In Memory of

\_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## NAMI-Santa Clara County Community Resource & Support Center

1150 S Bascom Av #24

San Jose, CA 95128

Phone: 408-453-0400

Fax: 408-453-2100

[www.namisanclaara.org](http://www.namisanclaara.org)  
[office@namisanclaara.org](mailto:office@namisanclaara.org)

**Office Hours: 10 A.M.-6 P.M. M-F** To reach our Warmline, call **408-453-0400**

**Option 1;**  
after hours, press **Option 4.**

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