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NAMI-Santa Clara County



Helpline (408) 453-0400 x1

July/August 2022



**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NEWS**

## Reframing a Mental Health Crisis Through 988

By Moryt Milo

When 988 goes live on **July 16**, a tsunami-size change will be felt in the mental health community. The new three-digit number for suicide prevention and mental health crisis services will shift the country away from calling 911 and triggering a police response.

The new number, which replaces the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) at 1-800-273-8255, takes law enforcement out of the equation. Instead, a counselor on the phone or mobile crisis unit arrives on the scene to help de-escalate an individual in the throes of a mental health episode. The objective is to divert the individual from incarceration or hospitalization and navigate them toward mental health community services.

It's not a panacea and it might turn into a 911 call if safety issues become a factor. But by shifting calls to 988, mental health advocates and professionals hope to change the narrative and decriminalize the illness.

In California, there are 13 crisis centers certified by the Lifeline to respond to 988 calls. Santa Clara County is only one of two counties in the state that operate crisis centers. The other 11 centers are run by nonprofits.

SCC Suicide and Crisis Services Manager Lan Nguyen said the county is ahead of

other centers in planning and preparation for 988 due to available resources.

"We have been talking for close to two years about strategies in the county," he said, noting that 13 out of 15 cities in the county have a 911 unit that needs to be coordinated with 988 calls. The other two cities and unincorporated areas fall under the auspices of the Sheriff's Department which requires coordination with 988.

In 2021, the suicide and crisis services hotline received 52,429 calls. Nguyen said he will have a much better idea of call volume trends and the impact on the crisis center's workforce and funding needs about six months into the transition. He said the San Jose Police Department averages about 1500–2000 calls per month that could be deemed mental health-related calls, pointing out that the city of San Jose serves half of the county's population.

The county has three different mobile crisis response teams that will operate under the 988 umbrella. The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) travels with two clinicians and a law enforcement member who is CIT (Crisis Intervention Trained). This team responds to calls throughout the county.

The Mobile Response Stabilization Service Team (MRSS) also travels with master-

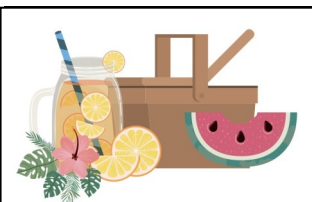
level clinicians and a family specialist with lived experience. It is contracted through Pacific Clinics (formerly known as Uplift) and focuses on youth and young adults 18–21. The county added three new MRSS units that will service North and South counties and the West Valley.

The third team is Trusted Response Urgent Support Team (TRUST) which will service all age groups. The team will include a First Aid professional, a crisis intervention worker, and a peer outreach specialist.

Even as the county prepares for the 988 rollout, success will be contingent on a robust referral and wraparound support services system. Each call will require a warm hand-off from the operator or counselor on the line to a mental health referral, or it may involve a mobile response team rolling to the call.

Nguyen, who has worked in the mental health sector since 1992 with various nonprofits, said, "I believe 988 will change the way most suicide and crisis centers function."

To read the full story about the 988 launch, [click here](#)



**NAMI-SCC Annual Picnic / NAMI Walks Kickoff**  
**Saturday July 9, 2022 ~ Noon–3 P.M.**

We hope you can join us at **Almaden Lake Park** in the Arroyo Picnic Area  
6099 Winfield Blvd, San Jose

## Update on Medi-Cal Changes

By Ellen Cookman

As we shared in an earlier newsletter, Medi-Cal for the aged and disabled is relaxing their eligibility requirements, as of **July 1, 2022**, from a cap of \$2000 in countable resources to an upper-level cap of \$130,000! The resource limit is being eliminated completely in January 2024! You can watch more about this change in our YouTube video “Medi-Cal Laws in California: How recent changes affect you.”

If you or a loved one is receiving an inheritance and are wondering if you still need a 1st party Special Needs Trust (SNT) to protect your public benefits, please reach out to us to ask questions. For some, a protective 1st party SNT is still necessary; for others, a SNT can be beneficial even if not required; for still others, a revocable trust may be sufficient. This change in the law requires more nuanced planning while providing more options for the disability community—and we love it!

## Thank You to Our Donors



NAMI-Santa Clara County is so grateful to our many supporters for their generosity. From April to June 2022, we received the following grants. These grants allow us to continue providing a

wide range of programs to the public free of charge. If you know of any foundations or organizations that might be interested in funding our programs, please email our Executive Director, Rovina Nimbalkar, at [nimbalkar@namisantaclara.org](mailto:nimbalkar@namisantaclara.org)

- ◆ KLA Foundation \$50,000 for FaithNet, Ending the Silence (ETS), In Our Own Voice (IOOV)
- ◆ The Valley Foundation \$40,000 for Community Peer Program (CPP)
- ◆ Farrington Historical Foundation \$5000 for ETS
- ◆ Kaiser Permanente \$25,000 for FaithNet
- ◆ Silicon Valley Community Foundation \$10,000 for FaithNet
- ◆ Kohl's \$7500 for Connection Recovery Support Group
- ◆ Whitney Foundation \$5000 for ETS
- ◆ Saratoga Federated Church \$1000 for FaithNet
- ◆ The Episcopal Church Women of St. Andrew's \$3000 for FaithNet

## The Social Work Law Enforcement (SWLE) Project June 14 General Meeting Summary

By Moryt Milo

When Eastern Connecticut State University Assistant Professor **Dr. Isabel Logan** teamed up with Willimantic Police Lt. **Matthew Solak** to create a police social work model, neither imagined the project would spread beyond the city's 4.5-mile borders to become a national model.

Timing and circumstances were on their side. In the aftermath of the George Floyd tragedy, Connecticut state legislators decided to push through a bill that would mandate greater accountability and transparency in police departments. Logan, a licensed clinical social worker, had moved from the public defender's office into academia and wanted to develop a project that would bring together social work and law enforcement. At the same time, Solak was looking for a way to partner with social workers. When Logan came knocking with two undergraduate social work interns, Solak discovered the answer sitting in his backyard.

The Willimantic Police Department has 50 sworn officers who are all Crisis Intervention Trained (CIT). Still, Solak said initially he was very cautious and measured in how he wanted to proceed because no one in Connecticut had ever done anything like this before. He modeled it after a field training officer/new recruit training relationship. He paired the interns with CIT officers who had supervisory experience. Once familiarity and trust were built, Solak felt comfortable sending the interns out with any officer.

Logan said even though she came from a public defender's office and worked in the drug courts with police, working with Solak was a different experience.

After two successful years of building out the program, word spread and other police agencies and universities with social work programs came calling. The SWLE (Social Work Law Enforcement) Project had been born.

The co-creators decided to offer a Police Social Work Academy, a four-day intensive training program on best practices. They brought together a variety of stakeholders from various police departments, social workers, interns, professors, and university administrators. The key takeaways were getting everyone trained in the same space and learning about one another, their education, and experiences.

“The Police Social Work Academy helped set the tone,” Logan said. “We are doing this work but there is more to it. This is a partnership of two people building together, learning and sharing together.”

Solak echoed those sentiments and added, “It's a true win for everyone. It takes you out of your silo. It's a truly positive collaboration because it affects so many people.”

To see the full interview on the SWLE Project, go to the [NAMI YouTube channel](#)

To read the full article, [click here](#)

To learn more about the SWLE Project, email [bsolivan@swleproject.com](mailto:bsolivan@swleproject.com)

**NOTE:** There will be no General Meetings in July and August. Past General Meeting presentations can be viewed by going to our website, [www.namisantaclara.org](http://www.namisantaclara.org), under News & Events and clicking “General Meetings.”

# NAMIWalks Updates

By Andres Florez  
NAMIWalks Silicon Valley Coordinator

I want to update you on NAMIWalks Your Way Silicon Valley which is happening on October 1 at History Park in San Jose at 1650 Senter Road, and share with you some facts I have learned along the way.

Our Walk is not a stand-alone walk. It is part of a series presented by NAMI National. Taking place in more than 120 locations across the United States, NAMIWalks Your Way is the largest, most vibrant mental health event series in the country. To date, over \$9 million has been raised.

NAMIWalks Your Way Silicon Valley is hosted by NAMI-Santa Clara County. Funds raised directly support NAMI-SCC's mission of education, advocacy, support, and awareness.

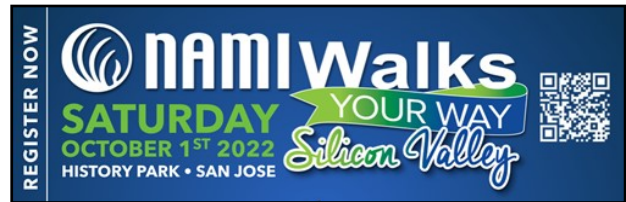
We are encouraging everyone to sign up for the Walk and join a team. It makes the event a lot more fun.

So far, we have raised close to \$60,000 between our teams and sponsorships, and we have a few commitments for larger donations. These will get us close to the \$100,000 mark. Please reach out to [aflorez@namisantaclara.org](mailto:aflorez@namisantaclara.org) if you or your company is interested in a sponsorship opportunity.

We have great news! Our keynote speaker will be Drew Robinson, Mental Health Advocate and Outfielder with the SF Giants. In addition, the entire mental health staff of the Giants will be joining us at the Walk.

This year, we are hosting a Picnic / Kickoff Event for the Walk on July 9 at Almaden Lake Park, Arroyo Picnic Area, 6099 Winfield Blvd. in San Jose from Noon.-3 P.M. There will be raffles and catered food, and it will be lots of fun!

I want to thank everyone involved directly and indirectly with NAMIWalks Your Way Silicon Valley. It is a very important event for a very important cause. I hope to see as many people as possible at the event.



## Legislative Update

By Frank Alioto

In 2020, it was estimated that there were 160,000 homeless in the state of California. Of those, it was estimated that 35% suffer from mental illnesses. Of that group, 25% suffer from a dual diagnosis of mental illness combined with substance abuse and/or drug addictions.

Those afflicted with serious mental illnesses and substance abuse are an exceedingly small segment of the California population; however, it takes many therapeutic pieces working together to achieve a satisfactory outcome when treating such patients.

That is why NAMI-Santa Clara County stays laser focused on the two biggest pieces of the therapeutic puzzle: access to therapy and access to safe housing.

Simple common sense as well as research tells us that the effectiveness of even the best medications and therapies are compromised if a patient is hungry and homeless.

In Santa Clara County, the housing part of the equation is now and has been for quite a few years out of reach for many who suffer from mental illnesses. In SCC, the median price of a single-family home is 1.6 million dollars, a condominium 750 thousand dollars, and a rental apartment \$2,957 per month. Right now, in one community in the South Bay, condominiums slated as "affordable housing" are selling for \$1,000,000.



Hard-working, healthy teachers, police officers, firefighters, and others cannot afford housing in this county let alone persons afflicted with mental illnesses who cannot work.

As a result, the largest housed therapeutic community in Santa Clara County focused on those suffering from mental health challenges and addictions is the county jail.

The situation is unacceptable. This is why NAMI California strongly endorses Governor Newsom's efforts to devote \$500 million dollars over the next two years to house homeless individuals on state-owned land through grants to local governments for interim housing as part of Project HomeKey. This will bring the total being spent on Project HomeKey to 2.9 billion dollars. It sounds like a lot of money, and it is, but keep in mind that this amount over the last two years represents far less than 1% of the state's budget.

This is not just putting people into a residence and forgetting about them. Mental health services, job placement, drug and alcohol treatment, and onsite community health workers are part of the plan, as well as therapeutic recreation.

Again, this is all part of Governor Newsom's plan to reduce homelessness and improve mental health care in California, and NAMI California strongly endorses these efforts.



## Podcast with Supervisor Susan Ellenberg

**Spotlight San Jose** features a bi-weekly look at top headlines and in-depth conversations with South Bay leaders, lawmakers, and influencers. On June 18, host Nick Preciado invited Supervisor **Susan Ellenberg** to discuss the county's

mental health crisis, how leaders are looking for solutions, and new efforts to balance the need for a new jail with mental health facilities.

The podcast is about 25 minutes long and you can access it here: <https://sanjosespotlight.com/the-podlight>



## NAMI CA Conference August 25–26, 2022

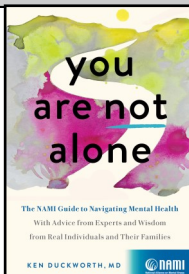
The 2022 NAMI California Annual Conference will take place on Thursday & Friday, August 25–26, at the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa in Newport Beach, California. To register, click here: <https://41339.thankyou4caring.org/2022-nami-california-annual-conference>

For information on booking a reservation at the Newport Beach Marriott, click here: <https://book.passkey.com/event/50318922/owner/24805/home>



## “You Are Not Alone”

NAMI’s first-ever book will be released this fall! **You Are Not Alone: The NAMI Guide to Navigating Mental Health** is now available to preorder. Written by NAMI Chief Medical Officer **Dr. Ken Duckworth**, the book is the essential resource for individuals and families seeking expert guidance on diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. All proceeds benefit NAMI and its mission. To preorder, visit [www.zandoprojects.com/books/you-are-not-alone](http://www.zandoprojects.com/books/you-are-not-alone)



## Life Insurance & Retirement Assets

Please consider naming NAMI as beneficiary of your life insurance policies or unused retirement assets. These can include individual retirement accounts (IRAs), 401(k)s, 403(b)s, or pensions. These types of planned gifts are a good option for donors who have paid up policies or retirement accounts that they won’t use up. Gifting retirement accounts and life insurance policies can be tax free.

## Outgoing NAMI-SCC Board President: Victor Ojakian



**Victor Ojakian**, NAMI-Santa Clara County’s outgoing Board President/ Co-President, works tirelessly on mental health and suicide prevention efforts. He participates in several local, regional, California & national organizations. He worked diligently to put the county’s Suicide Prevention Program in place and sits on the Suicide Prevention Oversight Committee, as well as on SAMHSA’s

Suicide Prevention Resource Center Advisory Committee.

Vic is a former City Council Member and Mayor of Palo Alto. He became active in NAMI-SCC shortly after his son took his own life in 2004. He is especially interested in promoting help-seeking behavior and reducing mental health stigma and discrimination.

Thank you, Vic, for your service to NAMI. We were privileged to have you on our Board.

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

1150 S Bascom Av #24, San Jose, CA 95128

Ph: 408-453-0400 Fax: 408-453-2100

Website: [www.namisantaclara.org](http://www.namisantaclara.org)

Email: [office@namisantaclara.org](mailto:office@namisantaclara.org)

Office Hours: 10 A.M.–6 P.M. M–F

To reach our Helpline, call 408-453-0400, Opt 1;

After hours, press Opt 4.

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NAMI membership enables you to subscribe to the latest mental health updates, participate in online discussion groups, learn how to advocate in your community and add your voice to the mental health movement.

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