



New Hospital 1



Officer Elections 1



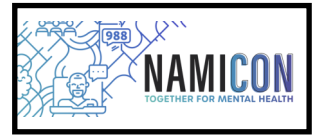
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NAMI Convention 4

NAMI-Santa Clara County

Helpline (408) 453-0400 Opt.1

March '23



**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NEWS**

## VMC Breaks Ground on Child, Adolescent Psychiatric Facility

By Moryt Milo



At a holiday party in 2014, Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian was pulled aside by a friend and asked: Why are there no inpatient psychiatric beds for children and adolescents in mental health crisis in Santa Clara County?

Even though Simitian had been serving in public office for ten years, he thought that could not be right—until he discovered it was the absolute truth.

Simitian said, “That was undeniably wrong in so many ways.”

He learned children in crisis had to travel hundreds of miles to receive care. They had to leave families, friends, and mental health providers behind due to the lack of services in their own community. Simitian was determined to change the situation and his efforts were unwavering.

Along the way, he picked up allies including Supervisors Cindy Chavez, Susan Ellenberg, and Otto Lee. They heard from parents attending board meetings who explained the challenges they endured dealing with a broken mental health care

system. How their children who needed treatment were transported alone to facilities in Vallejo, Sacramento, and Santa Rosa.

There were false starts after the project was approved in 2017, and during that time 689 youth continued to travel far away for crisis care. Now, nine years later, shovels are finally going in the ground and all who fought for this life-saving facility no longer have to imagine the possibility.

Santa Clara County will have the first countywide inpatient psychiatric facility for children and adolescents. The 207,000-square-foot behavioral health unit is estimated to cost \$422 million. The facility will include 77 beds: 14 beds for children; 21 beds for adolescents; and a separate, secure section with 42 beds for adults. A pharmacy and a new parking structure are also part of the design. The behavioral health wing is slated to open in 2025.

The children and adolescent part of the facility will provide emergency psychiatric services and mental health urgent care. A skyway will also be integrated into the design to enable a child who might need neurological or medical care to have access to those services. Chavez advocated for this after a parent explained that a health crisis might mirror a psychiatric problem but its origins may actually be physical not psychiatric. Chavez said that with an

integrated approach to services patient care will not be siloed. There will be one system available for all health care needs.

NAMI-Santa Clara County Executive Director Rovina Nimbalkar said this will serve a critical mental health need in the South Bay.

“This new center provides something NAMI members have long looked forward to—easier access to life-changing services. Now youth can get the help they need close to home, close to support networks.”

For Ellenberg, seeing the shovels about to go into the ground was an emotional moment. As a supervisor she and her colleague Lee declared a mental health emergency in the county in 2022, but the supervisor is also a parent who found herself in need of mental health services for one of her children and was shocked to learn there were limited resources.

“I had no options during that time,” she said. Eventually, Ellenberg found help but it was a painful awakening.

Ellenberg understood on a visceral level how difficult the road is for families in the midst of a mental health crisis. She knows this facility is a key piece of care in the county, a missing piece long overdue.

“Today is an exciting and encouraging milestone,” she said.

## Election of Board Officers 2023-2024

Here is our slate of candidates for 2023-2024:

President: Uday Kapoor

VPs: Beverly Lozoff, Harold Brown, Juan Perez, Frank Alioto

Treasurer: Steve Wade

Secretary: Peter Newman

The slate will be voted on at the March general meeting and installation of officers will take place in April. In addition, our Board has three members-at-large positions and we are looking to fill one of them. If you would like to learn more about this position, please contact Beverly at [blozoff@namisantaclara.org](mailto:blozoff@namisantaclara.org)

## General Meetings

### Feb. 14 General Meeting Recap: Exclusive Community Peer Program Provides Hope & Support By Moryt Milo

At the February General Meeting, Programs Manager **Sarah Prabhu** and Community Peer Program Coordinator **Sara Swanson** gave a powerful presentation on the positive outcomes of peer support programs.

NAMI-Santa Clara County has developed an exclusive one-on-one **community peer program** (CPP), which connects a NAMI peer mentor with an individual over a four-month period. Those who participate recognize they have a mental illness and want to learn coping skills by working with a peer who understands what they are experiencing.

Sara Swanson describes it as a reciprocal experience. Both the mentor and participant benefit from the relationship. "It's a program where we work together and build that connection."

CPP also collaborates with El Camino Hospital's Behavioral Health Department to make individuals aware that such a program exists prior to discharge. Behavioral health clinicians will encourage individuals receptive to the idea to consider participating. The hospital did a study on program outcomes, and evidence shows those who participate in CPP have a decrease in rehospitalizations.

What makes this program unique is its motto. The mentors are not there to fix, save, or advise the participants. The mentor is there to help guide and encourage independence. Participants decide what they want to achieve. There is no judgment and no pressure through the four-month process. The mentor does not see them as someone with a mental health condition. They are seen as who they want to be, Swanson said.

Several peer mentors talked about how they wished such a program existed years ago and the importance of having a "genuine human" who is there and can listen.

Swanson said, "I want people to know they are seen and heard."

Anyone interested in this program or other peer support programs is welcome to reach out.

*Click here to watch the presentation on [YouTube](#).*

*To learn more about the Community Peer Program, [click here](#)*

*For additional information about our peer programs, contact the Helpline at 408-453-0400 Option 1, Mon-Fri 10 A.M.-6 P.M.*



**Are you someone who is open to a peer relationship, wants to work on wellness and recovery, and wants to be independent and self-directed?**

#### Join our Community Peer Program!

Our vision for this program is to increase mental wellness and encourage independence for persons with a diagnosed mental health condition through the support of their peers.

The Community Peer Program was created for those living with a mental health condition who want to maintain wellness and recovery through mentorship from a peer who has walked in your shoes.

#### This program is also for you if you...

- Live in Santa Clara County
- Want to thrive outside a hospital environment
- You wish to be intentional about your future choices
- You want to learn to manage your symptoms
- You want to develop good coping strategies
- You wish to learn from others living with mental health conditions
- You want to find hope

Please note: Our mentors are themselves living with mental health conditions and working on their own wellness. This program is not suitable for someone looking for a friend to talk to daily or a respite for participant's caregiver.

For more information, contact: [CPP@namisantaclara.org](mailto:CPP@namisantaclara.org)

Visit our page at:

<https://namisantaclara.org/classes/nami-peer-program-2/>

"My mentor's support empowered me to change my life."



"With my mentor's support, I learned strategies to maintain recovery."



## Upcoming March 14 General Meeting: Resilient Option

Resilience is your ability to withstand adversity, bounce back from adversity, and grow despite life's downturns. A large body of literature supports the benefits of resilience for improving physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and occupational well-being. In this presentation, **Dr. Amit Sood** will take you on a backstage tour of the brain to help you understand brain mechanisms that deplete resilience and vitality every single day. Based on that understanding, you'll learn insights and skills by which you can overcome these neural vulnerabilities and thereby build a more resilient brain. The program has been tested and found effective in over 30 clinical trials to decrease symptoms of stress, anxiety, and burnout, and increase resilience, well-being, mindfulness, happiness, and positive health behaviors.

Dr. Sood, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.P., is the Executive Director of the Global Center for Resiliency and Wellbeing, former chair of the Mayo Mind Body Initiative, Carla and Russ Paonessa Enterprise Director of Student Life and Wellness, and Professor of Medicine (Retd.) with Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. Dr. Sood is internationally recognized for his work on stress resilience. He is a highly sought-after speaker, and has authored several books on stress management, resilience, happiness, and mindfulness. Dr. Sood has received numerous awards for his work.



**NOTE:** 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."

## NAMI-SCC Community Merit Award



Every year, NAMI-SCC's Board of Directors presents its Community Merit Award to a person or organization that has made significant contributions towards improving the quality of life of persons and families living with mental health challenges.

At the February 14 General Meeting, Navah Statman presented the 2022 award to **Miguel Valencia**, PhD, Director of Specialty Behavioral Health at Gardner

Health Services. Miguel is active with private behavioral health providers in Santa Clara County, and he has mentored many young Hispanic behavioral health clinicians.

We are thankful for his support of NAMI and NAMI families and of diverse communities. When we put together our NAMI en Español program a number of years ago, Miguel always helped in finding resources. Miguel was also a champion for mental health for many years and worked hard for the passage of Prop 63, the Mental Health Services Act. Congratulations, Miguel!

## Charitable Giving

Please consider including NAMI-Santa Clara County in your charitable giving.

We don't endorse specific companies as most of the large financial brokerages now have a not-for-profit subsidiary with extensive resources to help you plan and execute your plan. Here's an example: [Welcome to the Schwab Charitable Giving Guide | Schwab Charitable Donor-Advised Fund | Schwab Charitable.](#)

## Volunteer Spotlight: Sylvia Lichtenger

**Sylvia Lichtenger** is a native Californian, though she spent 25 years in New York City working as an executive search consultant. Upon returning to California, Sylvia started a business to help families with struggling teens find wilderness programs, residential treatment centers, and therapeutic boarding schools.

Last year when her loved one was hospitalized, Sylvia learned about NAMI and decided to take the Family-to-Family class. Now she works on the Helpline and is so excited to learn and give back.

Sylvia has an art studio in San Carlos where she goes almost every day to express her emotions and thoughts through abstract figurative painting. Her other passions include hiking and reading.



## Words Matter

By Frank Alioto

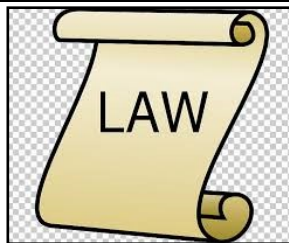
At 3.63 trillion dollars, California is the world's fifth-largest economy.

Yet the financial challenges for California continue to make headlines.

Our state is forecasting a 22 billion dollar budget deficit for this fiscal year after running consecutive years of budget surpluses. The final numbers for expenditures will not be known until the budget is signed off by Governor Newsom in June. Between now and then there is sure to be plenty of news about state programs that will be cut, particularly in the areas of public works and transportation.

Some financial experts are predicting a similar deficit situation for California for next year as well and perhaps financial challenges stretching into 2025.

Governor Newsom has been committed to not reducing the dollars that will be spent on mental health and other social services. That is the "good news."



The "bad news" is that the word "defer" has begun to creep into California budget conversations.

The California State government may not be "cutting" some mental health and social services programs, but the state is considering "deferring" expanding some vital programs, for example, deferring some of the needed growth in the behavioral health workforce and perhaps deferring

the Behavioral Health Demonstration Project designed to connect Californians with the most needs to mental health resources and housing for up to six months.

We cannot allow such programs to become "deferred." As populations and the cost of providing services increase, "deferring" is simply another word for "stagnation." Nothing changes.

**Note About NAMI-Santa Clara County Board Meetings:** NAMI-Santa Clara County's Board of Directors meets ten times per year (except August and December) on the first Tuesday of the month at 5:30 P.M. The board meetings are open to the public and we welcome your attendance. Please check our website for location.

## Join the Conversation



my community.  
my voice.

Mi comunidad. Mi voz. Nuestro cambio.  
我的社區、我的聲音、我們的改變、  
Ang aking kumunidad. Ang aking boses. Ang  
ating pagbabago.  
Cộng Đồng của tôi. Tiếng nói của tôi. Chúng  
ta tạo sự thay đổi.  
جامعه من صدای من. تغییر ما



Santa Clara  
County



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA  
Behavioral Health Services



# COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A CONVERSATION  
FOCUSED ON THE MENTAL HEALTH  
AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICE NEEDS

### All Clients/Consumers

Saturday, March 4  
12:00-1:30PM  
Virtually on Zoom

### Family Members

Saturday, March 11  
12:00-1:30PM  
Virtually on Zoom

Link: [bit.ly/mhsa-cc23](https://bit.ly/mhsa-cc23)  
or

Scan QR code to join

Phone: +1 699-900-6833

Meeting ID: 826 6618 0794



## NAMIcon 2023

## Together for Mental Health

Registration is now open for the NAMI National Convention, NAMIcon 2023. This year there are two formats. The in-person event takes place Wed, May 24-Sat, May 27 in Minneapolis; and the online, Zoom format takes place Tue, June 6-Thu, June 8. In Minneapolis you'll choose from 50+ sessions and have opportunities to meet people from across the country. For the online event, you'll choose from the best recorded sessions from Minneapolis with live Q&A.

Go to [convention.nami.org](https://convention.nami.org) for more details, the preliminary agenda, as well as registration information.

## Ending the Silence



## NAMI Ending the Silence

National Alliance on Mental Illness

### What is NAMI Ending the Silence?

NAMI Ending the Silence is a free presentation designed to give audience members an opportunity to learn about mental illness through an informative Power Point and short videos. There are three types of Ending the Silence presentations: one for Students, one for School Staff, and one for Families. Each presentation outlines symptoms of mental health conditions and gives attendees ideas about how to help themselves, friends, or family members who may need support. Additionally, all 3 presentations include personal testimony from a young adult living with a mental health condition and his/her journey to recovery.

NAMI California the state organization of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will offer its next NAMI Ending the Silence: Families presentation on Thursday, March 16, 2023. It will be held at 4:00 pm PST via zoom.

### Audience Perspectives

"It is amazing what just one day, one talk can do. You never really know what's going on in the brain of any particular student." -Teacher

"I'm really grateful and glad that you talked to us. I often feel very alone or weird because many kids my age don't understand. But, now I'm sure they would be more supportive of me." -Student



[Click Here to Register Now!](#)

### 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](https://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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Vic Ojakian

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Juan Perez

Harold Brown

Frank Alioto

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JOIN AND BECOME A NAMI MEMBER NOW!

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.

JOIN NAMI NOW!

