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NAMI-Santa Clara County

Helpline (408) 453-0400 Opt.1

September '23



**nami**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**NEWS**

## NAMI-SCC Protests to Save 18 Inpatient Beds

By Moryt Milo

On the last day of July, the weather was hot and the energy was electric as mental health advocates rallied in front of Good Samaritan Hospital to protest the closure of 18 inpatient psychiatric beds at Mission Oaks Hospital in Los Gatos.

Mission Oaks, part of San Jose-based Good Samaritan Hospital, is owned by HCA Healthcare, a multi-billion-dollar public company headquartered in Tennessee. The parent company announced on May 22 plans to close its inpatient psychiatric facility and its pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) at Mission Oaks.

HCA said the behavioral health inpatient services will shutter because Good Samaritan has been unable to hire physicians and psychiatric clinicians including therapists and licensed clinical social workers.

The closure of these 18 beds will compound the critical shortage of inpatient psychiatric beds for individuals covered by commercial insurance. Currently, there are only 211 such beds in Santa Clara County—80 beds at San Jose Behavioral Health Hospital, 36 beds at El Camino Hospital, 29 beds at Stanford Hospital, 48

beds at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, and the 18 beds at Mission Oaks.

This bed loss will reduce the stock by 9% in a county with a population of close to two million people. According to the California Hospital Association's most recent psychiatric bed report, there should be 12.69 inpatient psychiatric beds per 100,000 residents, the county is short 960 beds.

Although NAMI-Santa Clara County spearheaded the protest on July 31, NAMI affiliates from Contra Costa, Alameda, the East Bay, and the Tri-Valley, along with FASMI (Families Advocating for the Seriously Mentally Ill) and the Northern California Commission on Psychiatric Resources (NCCPR) from San Francisco joined forces to voice their frustration and displeasure about the decision.

The objective was to persuade HCA not to delicense the psychiatric facility but to deactivate the beds for now and work with the county or another healthcare provider to enable the location to be repurposed, perhaps as an inpatient chemical dependency treatment facility.

The protest attracted numerous public officials and long-time advocates who spoke at the event including retired state

Sen. Jim Beall, Assemblymember Ash Kalra, and former El Camino Hospital Executive Director of behavioral health and addiction services Michael Fitzgerald. Beall said, "I honestly don't know anybody who would ever give a mental health psychiatric facility a 90-day eviction notice. Where are these people going to go? A lot of these people will remain untreated."

The closure of the facility is not just a Santa Clara County problem, it is a regional problem that touches families throughout Northern California. When beds are full at local hospitals, patients are transferred to facilities in the East Bay, Central Valley or elsewhere, as providers seek out inpatient psychiatric care for those in crisis, Beall said.

In the end, HCA had made up its mind and closed the inpatient psych unit a week early. Now the odds for someone in need of an inpatient bed has shrunk in Santa Clara County, while finding quality treatment for those with severe mental illness has become harder.

To read the full article, go to [NAMI Blogs](#).

Watch our Instagram coverage of the protest. [Click here](#) and [here](#).

## NAMI Walks Silicon Valley 2023

REGISTER NOW



**SATURDAY** *Silicon Valley*  
OCTOBER 7TH 2023 • HISTORY PARK • SAN JOSE



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
San Francisco 49ers  
Parag Marathe  
President of 49ers Enterprises

CLICK HERE NOW

NAMI Walks Silicon Valley 2023 takes place on Saturday, October 7 at History Park, 635 Phelan Av, San Jose.

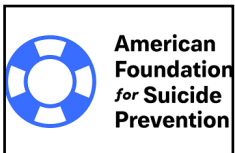
To register, go to [NAMI Walks.org/siliconvalley](https://namiwalks.org/siliconvalley)

To volunteer, go to [https://namiscc.ivolunteer.com/event\\_007](https://namiscc.ivolunteer.com/event_007)

## Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and Suicide Prevention Week is September 10-16. Suicide rates have increased more than 30 percent in half of all U.S. states since 1999, according to the CDC. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. and the 2nd leading cause of death of people ages 10-34.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's signature fundraising event is the Out of the Darkness Walk—a journey of remembrance, hope, and support. It's an opportunity to acknowledge how suicide and mental health conditions have affected our lives and the lives of those we love and care about.



Here is information about two local walks.

**1. San Francisco Walk:** This year's Out of the Darkness San Francisco Walk takes place on September 10 at Pier 27 in San Francisco. The Walk starts at 10 A.M.; check-in and registration begins at 9 A.M.

For more information, contact Emily Ladow / 650-270-8814  
[ootdsfwalk@gmail.com](mailto:ootdsfwalk@gmail.com)

**2. South Bay Walk:** This Out of the Darkness Walk takes place on October 28 at Arena Green West Park in San Jose. Check-in is at 9 A.M. Walk start time is 10 A.M.

Contact Kim Artman / 347-325-4874  
[afpsouthbaywalk@gmail.com](mailto:afpsouthbaywalk@gmail.com)

Are you in a crisis? Call or text **988** or text **TALK** to **741741** any time of the day 7 days per week. The Lifeline provides free and confidential support for people in distress, as well as prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.

## Expansion of Behavioral Health Navigator Program

Excerpted from July 14, 2023 San Jose Spotlight article by Lorraine Gabbert

One of Santa Clara County's newest mental health programs has expanded due to high demand. The Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Navigator Program launched last July in San Jose and Gilroy, connecting residents to county-contracted mental health services. As demand increased, the SCC Board of Supervisors authorized funding for two additional peer navigators in the field. The expanded field now includes Cupertino, Los Gatos, Mountain View, Palo Alto and Sunnyvale.

During its first year, the county connected almost 8,000 people with health services through the navigator call center.

Trained peer navigators listen to problems, provide information, and connect people with resources for mental health, substance use, suicide prevention, and support groups. Navigators are versed in county services and nonprofit partners who offer these programs. As peers, family members, and caregivers for someone who has experienced the behavioral health system, their lived experience makes them compassionate guides.

### Behavioral Health NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

*Personalized assistance to get help about your behavioral health questions, through peer support, information, and connection to local resources.*

**CONNECT WITH US REMOTELY:**

**(800) 704-0900, Option 4**  
**[BHNavigator@hhs.sccgov.org](mailto:BHNavigator@hhs.sccgov.org)**

**CONNECT WITH US IN PERSON:**

**Now at locations throughout Santa Clara County**

*Check the website for drop-in services location and schedules*

**[www.bhnavigator.org](http://www.bhnavigator.org)**

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA  
Behavioral Health Services



SCAN ME

## September 12 General Meeting Dr. Ken Duckworth: The Importance of Peer Support



The focus of the September General Meeting will be on the importance of peer support. Dr. **Ken Duckworth**, NAMI National Chief Medical Officer, will talk about how those with lived experience are a critical part of helping individuals struggling with severe mental illness work through their challenges and weather a crisis. In his book, **You Are Not**

Duckworth has served as NAMI's Chief Medical Officer since 2003. He is board-certified in adult psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry, and is an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He was previously acting commissioner and medical director at the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. Duckworth has worked on an assertive community treatment team, at an early psychosis program, at an elementary school, at a health plan, and with people who are unsheltered. His passion for this work comes from his loving dad who had bipolar disorder. Duckworth lives with his family in Boston.

**Alone**, he talks to numerous NAMI families and individuals about how that human connection is often a turning point.

**Note:** Past General Meeting presentations can be viewed by going to our website, [www.namisaclara.org](http://www.namisaclara.org), under News & Events and clicking "General Meetings."

# Navigating Mental Health Challenges: A Journey of Advocacy & Support

By Gini Mitchem

*Gini Mitchem's story of mental health advocacy sheds light on the importance of sharing personal experiences to destigmatize mental health. Her journey underscores that with perseverance, understanding and community support, mental health advocacy can foster positive change for individuals, families, and society as a whole. —Lleceenia Solorio, NAMIWalks Event Manager*



Embarking on a journey of mental health awareness and advocacy is a path that often encounters obstacles and breakthroughs while shaping lives and perspectives along the way. Many individuals such as myself, Virginie Mitchem, have faced challenges head-on and emerged as advocates for change. Here, I delve into my experiences, motivations, and hopes as I emerged as a mental health advocate. One of the initial hurdles I encountered was the realization that not all challenges have immediate

solutions. I had to tell myself “I could not fix it, there was no solution” and needed to accept that. Acceptance became a pivotal moment, paving the way for a new understanding of the mental health struggles I was living.

I quickly came to realize there is a lot of stigma and discrimination associated with mental health issues. In order to break down these barriers, I felt it was necessary to create widespread open dialogue. The way I found the motivation to begin this dialogue was by being a part of NAMI Santa Clara County; joining NAMI-Walks; creating a walk team, Weekend Walkers; and working to support the cause of mental health.

Navigating the realms of relationships, work, and overall well-being, has been intertwined with diverse experiences throughout my life. From being raised in a military family to embracing nature's healing power, these experiences really became building blocks for building a better understanding of mental health.

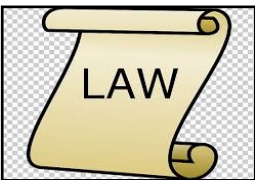
I can now say with clarity that my turning point and breakthrough occurred when I observed my daughter's life unfolding in its very unique way, leading to a sense of recovery. Support from organizations like NAMI played a pivotal role. Taking classes, joining programs, providing educational support, and going on hikes, while making new memories became tools for healing. I have encountered misconceptions about mental health—the false notion that a quick solution exists. I want to be clear, it does not. The solution comes through adaptability and the willingness to challenge these misconceptions in conversations and support groups and adapt to new realities.

Nature, camping, and hiking emerged as therapeutic activities, fostering connections and unforgettable memories with loved ones. These experiences significantly influenced my perspective on mental health and enabled me to connect with others through shared stories. I encourage you to find what works best for you and your loved ones on this mental health journey to also find healing.

I was recently asked about the future. My hopes are centered on continued advocacy, protesting injustice, and walking for mental health. My vision for a compassionate society lies in dismantling the division between mental and physical health, highlighting the importance of treating mental illnesses just like any other ailment. Supporting NAMIWalks Silicon Valley holds immense significance for me. The gathering of individuals overcoming diverse challenges, along with the support of families and providers, reinforces the idea that recovery is possible.

Today I walk for my daughter Heidi, for the NAMI family, and for the transformation they have experienced., while not forgetting those who have walked beside me leaving a legacy on this Walk journey. Laurie Williams, a NAMI Director who sadly passed away, continues to inspire my advocacy. In the midst of my journey, I found a book that influenced my view on mental health; I hope you find it as great a read as I did: *Surviving Schizophrenia* by E. Fuller Torrey.

## Legislative Update: SB 43



California state Sen. Susan Eggman has authored a bill, SB 43, that would revise the language in the Lanterman Petris Short (LPS) Conservatorship law. The 56-year-old law's definition of “gravely disabled” is too subjective many families argue, and they hope the bill will reach Gov. Gavin Newsom's desk.

Under current law, individuals with a severe mental illness like schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder can be conserved if they are unable to provide for their basic personal needs such as food, clothing, or shelter. But oftentimes, this is not enough cause for the police or other authorities to place them on an involuntary hold, or 5150. Under SB 43, the modified proposed language would add the inability to manage medical care and personal

safety, and include individuals with substance use to the current definition of gravely disabled criteria.

In a San José Spotlight article, [Silicon Valley family exposes need to reform conservatorship law](#), one mom battles the Santa Clara County mental healthcare system for almost 30 years, trying to get her son help through long-term treatment. For this mother, the only option meant finding a way to get her son conserved.



**Note About NAMI-Santa Clara County Board Meetings:** SCC's Board of Directors meets ten times per year (except August & December) on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 5:30 P.M. The board meetings are open to the public and we welcome your attendance. Currently, our board meetings are virtual; check our website for log-in info.

# El Camino Health 6th Annual Maternal Mental Health Symposium



**WHEN:** Friday, September 29

**TIME:** 8:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

This virtual event is generously hosted by the Keller Family and there is no cost to attend. Further details about continuing education units will be detailed on El Camino Health's event website.

For more information and to register, go to

[https://whova.com/portal/registration/echam\\_202309/?sfmc\\_id=7390534&utm\\_campaign=&utm\\_source=&utm\\_medium=&utm\\_term=&utm\\_content=](https://whova.com/portal/registration/echam_202309/?sfmc_id=7390534&utm_campaign=&utm_source=&utm_medium=&utm_term=&utm_content=)

## Do You Need a Plan?

Now is the perfect time to plan ahead and get your important documents in order. NAMI National has partnered with FreeWill to make it easy for you to start or update your will.

Visit [NAMI.ORG/FREEWILL](https://www.nami.org/freewill) to access your free account and get started today.

Your gift to **NAMI-Santa Clara County** will be greatly appreciated and carefully used in ways to best benefit our community.

# Adult Mental Health First Aid



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA  
Behavioral Health Services



## Adult Mental Health First Aid Join the movement

Take a course. Save a  
life. Strengthen your  
community.

**September 18 & 20, 2023**  
**12:30 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.**

To register please contact:

**Peggy Cho**

[Peggy.cho@hhs.sccgov.org](mailto:Peggy.cho@hhs.sccgov.org)

**\*\*\*Participant is required to attend both days of class to complete the course\*\*\***

**Location of Training:**  
1075 E. Santa Clara Street, 2nd  
Floor, San Jose, CA 95116

A person you know could be experiencing a mental health or substance use problem.

Learn an action plan to help.

You are more likely to encounter someone in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. Learn how to help a student, friend, family member, coworker or neighbor in need. Anyone 18 and older can take Mental Health First Aid.



Family Outreach and Engagement Program

For more information, visit  
[www.sccbhds.org/ccwp](http://www.sccbhds.org/ccwp)

## 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.namisanataclara.org](http://www.namisanataclara.org)

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

Office Hours: 10 A.M.-6 P.M. M-F

Walk-in Hours: 10 A.M.-2 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.

**JOIN NAMI NOW!**

