



November 5, 2018

## New clinic for sexual assault victims in South Bay to open at Stanford Hospital and Clinics in 2019

By Amanda del Castillo

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A new partnership between Santa Clara County and Stanford will put a sexual assault forensic exam clinic in the northern part of the county.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, Calif. (KGO) -- A new partnership between Santa Clara County and Stanford University will put a sexual assault forensic exam clinic in the northern part of the county, locally known as North County.

The planned clinic will improve accessibility to the growing number of people reporting their attacks in the South Bay.

Advocates tell ABC7 News, more victims throughout Santa Clara County are reporting the crimes. It isn't clear whether more people are committing these crimes, or if people are feeling more empowered to come forward.

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In any case, County Supervisor Joe Simitian says the growing need for sexual assault exams means there is great urgency to put new clinics in areas where resources are lacking.

Forensic exams are meant to be performed within 72-hours of a sexual assault. The specific timing allows for DNA and other physical evidence to be collected.

According to Supervisor Simitian, sexual assault forensic exams are currently only performed at Valley Medical Center in San Jose.

For those outside of San Jose, that means a trek away from home after having experienced trauma.

"One of the things we've been pushing for is to see if we can't make that process a little less traumatic," Supervisor Simitian said. "Hopefully, by providing those services in a more familiar environment, and closer to home."

The partnership between the county and university started to take shape once Supervisor Simitian wrote to Stanford University president, Marc Tessier-Lavigne.

The supervisor explained his concern about a proposal to open a pilot clinic at the university's Vaden Health Center. The pilot clinic would be open on weekends, and only available to people who were assaulted under the Stanford Department of Public Safety's jurisdiction.

Supervisor Simitian shared his letter to Tessier-Lavigne, with ABC7 News. Simitian also shared the university president's response.

Tessier-Lavigne acknowledged the need to "reduce the burden on already traumatized victims who, today, have to travel a long distance to the southern part of the County for their examination."

He wrote, "I am able to commit that Stanford Medicine will indeed be able to service the entire population of northern Santa Clara County, pending finalization of an updated agreement, and as soon as the County is able to provide the trained personnel."

Tessier-Lavigne wrote that Stanford has determined that a space can be provided at the existing Stanford Hospital and Clinics.

Supervisor Simitian told ABC7 News, "Now it falls on the county to make sure we have the right staff in place to provide these exams when they're necessary."

The clinic would serve cities like Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, and others. The new clinic at Stanford is expected to be completed by 2019.

YWCA Silicon Valley CEO, Tanis Crosby, told ABC7 News the planned clinic is coming at a crucial time.

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"More and more survivors are reaching out, and they're not just saying, 'Me too,'" Crosby said. "They're saying, 'I need your help.'"

Crosby says it's projected there will be 400 sexual assault medical exams needed county-wide, in the coming year.

Crosby told ABC7 News, "I think there's a real opportunity here to be curious about, can we expand the number of locations?"

She explained, the YWCA is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world. As a local association of the national and world YWCA's, the YWCA of Silicon Valley shares in the long history of advocacy for women and girls.

For immediate in-person crisis assistance and counseling services, victims of sexual violence can contact YWCA's 24-hour support line at 800-572-2782.

Crosby and Simitian agree the new clinic is a step in the right direction, but also that more needs to be done to address the needs of the growing number of sexual assault victims in the South Bay.

# The Mercury News

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CRIME

## Sexual assault exam site to open at Stanford Hospital

As reported attacks increase, victims will have a SAFE space closer to home

By Aldo Toledo

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PALO ALTO — A day after Stanford University re-

leased its latest report of sexual misconduct on campus, Santa Clara County is set to expand access to sexual assault exams at the university's new hospital.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian announced Tuesday that Stanford Health Care intends to host the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center sexual assault forensic

exam team along with rape crisis advocates to respond to sexual assault survivors starting as early as February.

The center will operate 24 hours a day at the newly opened Stanford Hospital's emergency room with specially-trained nurses on-call to perform the exams.

Currently, those exams are conducted primarily

at Valley Medical Center in San Jose.

"For people who have already been traumatized, asking them to go to a remote location that is unfamiliar, away from friends, family and home in their own community, I just think that further aggravates the trauma," Simitian said. "I'm hopeful that having a SAFE site here in a

more familiar environment, closer to home, can lessen some of that trauma."

The partnership comes amid a 58% increase in the number of reported sexual assaults in the county from 2015 to 2018, and a day after a report found that Stanford received 279 cases of sexual harassment and gender discrimination over the past year.

The university offered to host a pilot of the SAFE site in 2018, but in a letter to Stanford President Marc Tessier-Lavigne in October 2018, Simitian said there was "widespread concern" that the clinic would only serve residents whose assaults happened on university property.

Now the new SAFE site

## Stanford

will be available to all county residents.

"This partnership with Santa Clara County has

allowed Stanford Health Care the opportunity to provide a private and supportive setting in our new emergency department where the County's sexual assault response team can deliver the highest level of compassionate

care." Stanford Health Care President David Entwistle said in a news release. "We're proud to make this important service available to our surrounding community, which will help patients obtain this essential care more easily."

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