

Steps on our Journey to Better Health


We are proud to note our progress in promoting **Better Health for All**. Our dedicated team continues to work to improve the care, service and value we provide to our patients, clients and community.

In June, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved an **\$11.3 billion budget** for the coming fiscal year. Despite a challenging fiscal environment, the County Board of Supervisors funded critical programs that will continue to protect and improve the health of our community. The budget demonstrates the County's continuing dedication to the well-being of residents and highlights the County's vision for creating a thriving community and a financially viable and sustainable healthcare delivery system.

Among the many ways **the new budget supports better health for all**: new staff positions in our hospitals and clinics to improve access to services, reduce patient wait times and meet patient demand; funding for new Valley Health Centers across the county, increasing access to care and convenience of services; support for community-driven prevention and intervention strategies in neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence; and increased investment in our successful Community Mobile Response Programs.



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
Health System



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA Behavioral Health Services



Promoting 988, the Crisis and Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The department teamed up with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) as part of a high-visibility, multi-lingual **campaign to raise awareness about critical mental health services**. The new ads – including a wrapped bus and placards inside and on VTA vehicles and at transit stops throughout the county – promote 988, the County's Crisis and Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Addressing the Opioid Crisis

The Behavioral Health Services Department has received a grant from the California Department of Health Care Services to help **prevent opioid overuse and addiction in youth** ages 12-24. The department will use the funds to provide education on opioid use, its risks, and available resources; increase access to screening and referrals to outpatient treatment and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) for youth with or at risk of opioid use disorders; and create a team of physicians and clinicians who will provide youth MAT services.



Landmark in Suicide Prevention

In April, it was announced that every city and town in Santa Clara County has formally adopted a **city suicide prevention policy**. The policies establish concrete steps cities will take to address the issue of suicide and promote suicide prevention in local communities. The development results from years-long work by the Behavioral Health Service Department's Suicide Prevention Program.

More Navigators, More Help

Peer Navigators help connect people and families to County and community resources and guide them through the behavioral health system. Three new Peer Navigators were added to the team in May, and the program now provides weekly in-person support at West Valley Community Services, the Los Gatos Library, Sunnyvale Community Services, the Palo Alto Courthouse, and Community Services Agency.



SANTA CLARA VALLEY HEALTHCARE

Meeting the Climate Change Challenge

Santa Clara Valley Healthcare (SCVH) took a **significant step in the battle against climate change** in May by signing the federal health sector **Climate Pledge initiative**. SCVH will create a plan to dramatically reduce its carbon footprint at all its hospitals and clinics and become net zero by 2050. All areas of operations will be explored to reduce environmental harms, including on-site emissions from energy usage and waste from anesthetic gases, vehicles and refrigerants.

Universal, Planet-friendly Meals

St. Louise Regional Hospital became the first public hospital in the nation to introduce Universal Meals, a nationwide program to create **healthy, inclusive menu offerings** in large institutions. Universal Meals offers simple guidelines and recipes free of animal products, gluten-containing grains, nuts, alcohol, and other allergens to accommodate food preferences and common allergies.

MedAssist Enrollment Milestone

The County of Santa Clara's medication adherence program, **MedAssist**, achieved a milestone in June by enrolling its first **1,000 grantees**. The MedAssist program is administered by the SCVH Pharmacy Department, and is specifically designed to support the county's "missing middle" income population in paying high out-of-pocket medical costs. No matter where health care is received, those living in our county with a valid prescription for diabetes medications, asthma inhalers, or epinephrine auto-injectors may qualify for cash grants.




Santa Clara County PUBLIC HEALTH

Improving Health Outcomes

In Santa Clara County, mothers and babies of African Ancestry experience the highest rates of infant mortality, low birth weight and other health issues. To address this inequity, the Santa Clara County **Perinatal Equity Initiative** held its first **Perinatal Equity Conference** online on Wednesday, April 12. Speakers included national experts in health equity for the perinatal population, with the goal of improving health outcomes for African Ancestry women and birthing people. More than 450 people joined the conference.

Award-winning Campaign Promotes Vaccines

Over the years, vaccines have prevented countless cases of disease and disability and have saved millions of lives. Vaccines help teach the immune system how to defend against germs and protect children and adults by helping build their natural defenses. This spring a Public Health Department awareness campaign "**Part of Growing Up**" engaged community partners, parents, and caregivers to **increase childhood vaccination** after a nationwide decline during the COVID pandemic. An additional vaccine education campaign reaching Latino older adults earned the department a statewide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Outreach award from CAPIO, the California association for public sector communicators.



Expanding Access to Coverage and Care

Valley Health Plan (VHP) has expanded to help support the overall health and well-being of Monterey and San Benito County residents with a **new office in Salinas**. VHP's monthly premiums are among the lowest in the region, and the extensive provider network in Monterey County and San Benito County allows members access to preferred doctors, specialists, hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics. Uninsured residents experiencing a "**qualifying life event**" can explore plan options and apply today.



More Patients Qualify for Primary Care Services

The **Primary Care Access Program (PCAP)** is a low-cost coverage program that provides primary health care services to adults living in Santa Clara County who do not have access to health insurance. The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors recently **improved access to health benefits for the "missing middle" income earners** by extending the Primary Care Access Program to those who earn up to 650% of the federal poverty level. Now people who earn an income too high for other programs may be eligible for PCAP benefits.



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA Emergency Medical System Agency



Distracted Driving Campaign

Did you know the odds of crashing increase 20 times if you text while driving? During April – Distracted Driving Awareness Month – the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency held a **public awareness campaign on the dangers of distracted driving**. Digital billboards, radio ads, social media posts and other public outreach in multiple languages were designed to remind people to "leave the phone alone."

Custody Health Services



Pilot Program on Blood Lead Levels

Our Health System took another step forward on our journey to better health for all when Custody Health Services (CHS) launched a pilot program to screen youth detained in Juvenile Hall and James Ranch for **elevated blood lead levels**. The pilot will check the blood lead level of justice-involved youth, determine their current risks of exposure and see if additional evaluations or services are needed to support them and their family members' health.

Awards and Honors



In May, St. Louise Regional Hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) received the prestigious **Silver Beacon Award for Excellence** from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN.) The ICU was recognized for **setting standards for excellence in patient-care environments** by collecting and using evidence-based information to improve patient outcomes, patient and staff satisfaction, and credibility with consumers.

All three Santa Clara Valley Healthcare hospitals – Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, O'Connor Hospital, and St. Louise Regional Hospital – received awards from Cal Hospital Compare (CHC) and the American Heart Association. The CHC recognized the hospitals for their opioid abuse effort abatement efforts, awarding them with their 2023 **Opioid Honor Roll Program's** "Excellent Progress" rating for their increased access to addiction treatment for hospitalized patients and reduction of opioid-related deaths. The hospitals also received the highest accolade from the American Heart Association – the **Stroke GOLD PLUS Award** – as well as honor roll recognition in achieving specific targets for stroke treatment and Type 2 Diabetes management and prevention. The GOLD PLUS Award designation highlights SCVH's efforts to ensure that quality care is provided to patients and aligned with the latest research-based guidelines grounded in specific evidence for stroke treatment.

