

California County Moves Forward With Latino Health Center Proposal

Santa Clara community leaders unanimously decided to continue gathering information needed to create a Latino health and wellness center.

May 24, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Community leaders in Santa Clara, California, decided to move forward with an idea to build a Latino health and wellness center, according to the [San José Spotlight](#).

During a recent budget debate, the Board of Supervisors, including Supervisor Sylvia Arenas, unanimously decided to ask county employees to return in June with strategies for developing a facility and thoughts on whether it should have multiple locations.

Supervisors insist on receiving community input and say they won't make a final decision until the Latino Health Needs Assessment collects data from county residents on gaps in health care access.

"I don't want to predetermine a product or outcome," Arenas said at the meeting. "When you go through a process with the community, you learn so much more about that community than you think you know."

The health and wellness center proposal garnered approval from Black, Asian and Latino residents and patient health advocates, such as the nonprofit [Latinas Contra Cancer](#).

Latinas Contra Cancer executive director Darcie Green said the public response surprised her.

"Hospitals and clinics belong to the community, so it is powerful to see this incredible display of solidarity pushing our county delivery system to better serve Spanish speakers," Green told the San José Spotlight.

An [Aflac Incorporated survey](#) found that among Latino respondents, 31% indicated language as a barrier to preventive care; indeed, 72% of Latinos avoided a wellness screening for this reason, compared with 46% of those who did not feel language was a barrier.

Additionally, language barriers can contribute to dangerous misdiagnosis, mistreatment or incorrect medication prescriptions.

Since the pandemic, Latinos in Silicon Valley have faced heightened challenges surrounding quality of life and access to care, according to the Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley's [2023 Latino Report Card](#). This group continues to experience education gaps, poor housing conditions, health disparities and more.

Community members hope the new wellness center will focus on eliminating these disparities and encourage culturally sensitive health care.

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