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## **Peninsula Health Care District Launches Blue Zones Ignite™ to Improve Longevity and Well-being in the Peninsula**

*Blue Zones to assess San Mateo County's well-being and create a plan to help residents live better and longer*

**[Burlingame, CA - February 18, 2026]** — Peninsula Health Care District (PHCD) and Blue Zones, the global leader in longevity research and community well-being transformation, have announced a partnership to launch Blue Zones Ignite™ assessment in San Mateo County, reaching more than 200,000 residents served by PHCD across San Bruno, Millbrae, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, half of Foster City, and the southeast corner of South San Francisco.

Blue Zones uses an evidence-based, environmental approach to making healthy choices easier in the places where people spend the most time. Blue Zones will work with the Peninsula Health Care District and other community leaders to conduct an in-depth readiness and feasibility assessment to determine how to make it a healthier place to live, work, and thrive. Together with the community, the Blue Zones team will assess readiness and build a plan for change.

“We are excited to bring Blue Zones Ignite to San Mateo County and spark meaningful conversations that lead to action,” said Ana M. Pulido, CEO of PHCD. “By engaging residents and leaders across sectors, we can gain a deeper understanding of the real barriers to health, longevity, and connectedness—and make informed, long-term decisions that strengthen well-being at both the neighborhood and regional levels.”

“Blue Zones’ evidence-based approach to community well-being aligns strongly with our long-term priorities as a District,” shared Lawrence W. Cappel, Ph.D., Board Chair of Peninsula Health Care District. “This model will help accelerate sustainable progress in health, wellness, and longevity for the residents we serve.”

Key leaders from across the mid-Peninsula have joined the effort, including the Health Plan of San Mateo, Mills-Peninsula Medical Center, the San Mateo County Health Foundation, and representatives from the City of Burlingame, the City of San Mateo, and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.



“All of us want to live as healthy and long as possible, so I welcome this new partnership between Peninsula Health Care District and Blue Zones in San Mateo County,” Supervisor Speier said. “Research from Blue Zones shows that communitywide decisions about infrastructure, policies, and systems play a critical role in population health. I want San Mateo County to replicate the results seen in other Blue Zones communities, including reductions in obesity and smoking rates and meaningful healthcare cost savings.”

As part of the project, the Blue Zones team will be in San Mateo for an in-person visit to tour the city, meet community members, and kick off the initiative. The College of San Mateo Theater will host a keynote event on Tuesday, April 7, at 1700 West Hillsdale Boulevard, San Mateo, CA 94402, offering residents and leaders a first-hand look at the project and an opportunity to get involved.

Registration and full event details are available at <https://bluezonesignitesanmateokeynote.eventbrite.com>. Registration is encouraged as space is limited.

### **The Blue Zones Approach**

Blue Zones employs a proven solution in collaboration with communities to help people live better and longer lives. The company’s work is based on research and principles developed by National Geographic Fellow and New York Times bestselling author Dan Buettner, who identified the cultures of the world – or blue zones – with the healthiest, longest-living populations.

The Blue Zones approach focuses on the largest determinant of health: the environment in which we live. Instead of focusing solely on individual behavior change, Blue Zones helps communities make permanent and semi-permanent changes to policies, systems, streets, surroundings, and social networks so it’s easier for residents to eat wisely, move naturally, and connect more with others as they move throughout their day. By improving the Life Radius®—the area close to home where most Americans spend 90% of their lives—Blue Zones transformations have been able to move the needle dramatically in improving overall population health and well-being. Participating communities have seen double-digit drops in obesity and smoking rates, economic investment in downtown corridors, grant funding awards to support policies and programs to improve health equity, and measurable savings in healthcare costs.

Ben Leedle, CEO of Blue Zones and Co-founder of Blue Zones Project, said: “Transforming community well-being requires everyone at the table, and San Mateo County is showing what public-private partnership looks like. The Peninsula Health Care District, local municipalities, healthcare leaders, and community organizations are aligning around a shared vision for a healthier future. Blue Zones is honored to help work with these partners to build a plan that supports longer, better lives for Peninsula residents.”

The Blue Zones expert team will connect with Peninsula Health Care District to begin immediate work assessing the strengths, needs, and challenges that residents are facing today. Blue Zones will then create a policy-focused transformation plan that, once implemented, can drive widespread



improvements in well-being, reductions in healthcare costs, and improve economic vitality in the region. Learn more [here](#).

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#### **About Blue Zones**

Blue Zones employs evidence-based ways to help people live better, longer. The company's work is rooted in explorations and research done by founder and National Geographic Fellow Dan Buettner in blue zones regions around the world, where people live extraordinarily long and/or happy lives. The original research and findings were released in Buettner's bestselling books *The Blue Zones Solution*, *The Blue Zones of Happiness*, *The Blue Zones*, *Thrive*, and *Blue Zones Kitchen*—all published by National Geographic books. A hit docuseries, *Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones*, was released on Netflix in 2023. Using original Blue Zones research, Blue Zones works with cities and counties to make healthy choices easier through permanent and semi-permanent changes to our human-made surroundings. Participating communities have experienced double-digit drops in obesity and tobacco use and have saved millions of dollars in healthcare costs. For more information, visit [www.bluezones.com](http://www.bluezones.com).

#### **About Peninsula Health Care District**

Established in 1947, the Peninsula Health Care District is a public agency dedicated to advancing the health and wellness of more than 200,000 residents across San Bruno, Millbrae, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Foster City, and parts of South San Francisco. PHCD provides community-based health programs and partners with local organizations to enhance access to care, wellness, and resources for vulnerable populations. Learn more at: [www.peninsulahealthcaredistrict.org](http://www.peninsulahealthcaredistrict.org).