

Community FAQ

About the Program

Who is Cardea Health?

Cardea Health is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides housing, healthcare, and mental healthcare for people who are unhoused or at risk of becoming unhoused. Cardea Health operates multiple medical respite and interim housing programs across Alameda County and the Bay Area with strong, documented outcomes.

When will Natalie's Place open?

It will open on June 1, 2026.

What is this site and who is it for?

The experience of homelessness can age a person by 20 years. In South Alameda County, 1 in 5 unhoused residents are already over 55 and many more experience chronic health conditions. This program would be the first medical respite interim housing in the region, focused on serving these vulnerable populations.

This site provides interim housing with on-site medical and supportive services for individuals experiencing homelessness who have acute or ongoing medical needs. The program is designed to help people stabilize, recover, and transition into permanent housing.

Program Residents

How are residents selected for the program?

Residents are admitted through a formal referral process coordinated with Alameda County systems and healthcare partners. Referrals prioritize people experiencing homelessness who have significant medical needs and would benefit from short-term, service-rich interim housing.

How long do residents typically stay?

Length of stay varies based on medical needs and housing placement timelines, but the program is short-term by design and focused on helping residents move in to permanent housing as quickly and safely as possible.

Is this a drop-in center or emergency shelter?

No. This is not a drop-in center or emergency shelter. Individuals cannot walk in or self-enroll. Residents are admitted through a formal referral process coordinated with Alameda County systems and healthcare partners.

How are residents referred to the program?

Referrals prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness with significant medical needs. While placement decisions are coordinated at the county level, the program is designed to support efforts to address homelessness within the local community, including Fremont.

Do residents have the flexibility to come and go at any time?

Yes. Residents can come and go as they please. While their movement is not restricted, access to the site itself is controlled to ensure safety and accountability.

Safety, Security, and Operations

How is the site secured?

The site operates as a closed campus with a single controlled entrance and exit. Professional security staff are present 24/7, access is monitored, visitors are screened and approved, and a strict no-weapons policy is enforced.

How are safety concerns typically handled on site?

The program has clear rules and expectations. Staff prioritize de-escalation and clinical intervention, with zero tolerance for violence or serious safety violations. When necessary, residents may be exited from the program following established protocols.

The site is staffed around the clock with trained security and clinical personnel, allowing most issues to be addressed on site. Law enforcement is contacted only when necessary and as a last resort.

Where can I find more information about security and site operations?

For a detailed overview of site security, access control, staffing, and operational protocols, please see the Community Safety section of the NataliesSpace.org site. This page provides comprehensive information on how the site is managed day-to-day to ensure safety, accountability, and minimal impact on the surrounding community.

Impact on the Neighborhood

How does the site's location affect the surrounding neighborhood?

The site is not located along common pedestrian routes to schools or parks. Independent walkability analyses indicate limited pedestrian access to these destinations, and the site's proximity to the freeway further discourages pedestrian through-traffic into surrounding residential areas, helping ensure that site-related activity remains confined to the immediate vicinity.

The site's closed-campus design and interior courtyard allow for resident activity to occur within the property rather than on surrounding sidewalks or streets. Controlled access discourages loitering and unregistered visitors.

How will Natalie's Place help address homelessness in the area?

People typically arrive at a shelter after a crisis such as losing a home, fleeing violence, leaving a hospital, surviving on the street, or running out of places to stay. Homelessness will be alleviated if people have a safe place to stay.

Will this program increase homelessness in Fremont?

No. Interim housing programs do not create homelessness. They provide a structured pathway off the streets for people who are already experiencing homelessness, helping reduce encampments and stabilize individuals so they can transition into permanent housing.

Program Effectiveness and Outcomes

Does this model work?

Yes. Cardea Health operates multiple medical respite and interim housing programs across Alameda County and the Bay Area with strong, documented outcomes.

What results has Cardea Health achieved at similar sites?

Across Cardea-operated medical respite programs serving medically vulnerable individuals:

- **87% reduction in hospital admissions** while clients are enrolled in respite care
- **32% reduction in ambulance utilization** and **14% reduction in emergency room visits** during program participation
- **\$3,157 average healthcare cost savings per client per month**, even after accounting for the cost of respite services
- **\$2.7 million in total healthcare costs avoided in a single year** across Cardea-operated sites

These outcomes reflect the effectiveness of pairing interim housing with on-site medical, behavioral health, and care coordination services.

What happens to residents after they leave the program?

The program is designed to transition residents into permanent housing or longer-term care settings. Most participants are discharged into stable housing or appropriate ongoing care, rather than returning to unsheltered homelessness.

Accountability and Community Partnership

How is this program funded?

This program is funded through Measure W, a voter-approved Alameda County initiative designed to address homelessness through housing, healthcare, and supportive services. Measure W reflects a community mandate to invest in effective, accountable solutions that reduce homelessness and improve public health outcomes.

Who do I contact if there is an issue or concern?

There will be a dedicated community email address for questions, concerns, or feedback related to the site. Messages will be monitored by site leadership, with a commitment to timely response and follow-up so concerns can be addressed quickly and directly.

How will Cardea Health engage with the community and stay accountable?

Cardea is committed to being a long-term partner and resource for the surrounding community. We will maintain open lines of communication, host regular community meetings, and respond quickly to any concerns to ensure the site continues to operate safely and responsibly.