

Meet our new CEO

Center for Elders' Independence is very excited to welcome our new Chief Executive Officer, Maria Zamora. Maria's executive management career is the result of excelling in the healthcare and insurance industries for more than 24 years. She will be an ideal guide as CEI continues to adapt to the pandemic and innovate our program to better care for the vulnerable populations we serve.

Maria's broad experience in analyzing financial viability and compliance for initiatives, as well as analyzing proposals, markets and capital additions will serve CEI well during this transformative moment. What's more, she has spent the past decade working for PACE organizations across the southwest where she spearheaded initiatives to raise awareness, grow membership and expand the all-inclusive program into new areas. Maria is on the board of directors for both CalPACE and the National PACE Association,



Maria Zamora, CEI's new Chief Executive Officer

tirelessly advocating for the program she deems to be "a spectacular, comprehensive health and social care model for vulnerable older adults."

Here are some of Maria's thoughts to help you get to know her better.

What attracted you to the opportunity at Center for Elders' Independence?

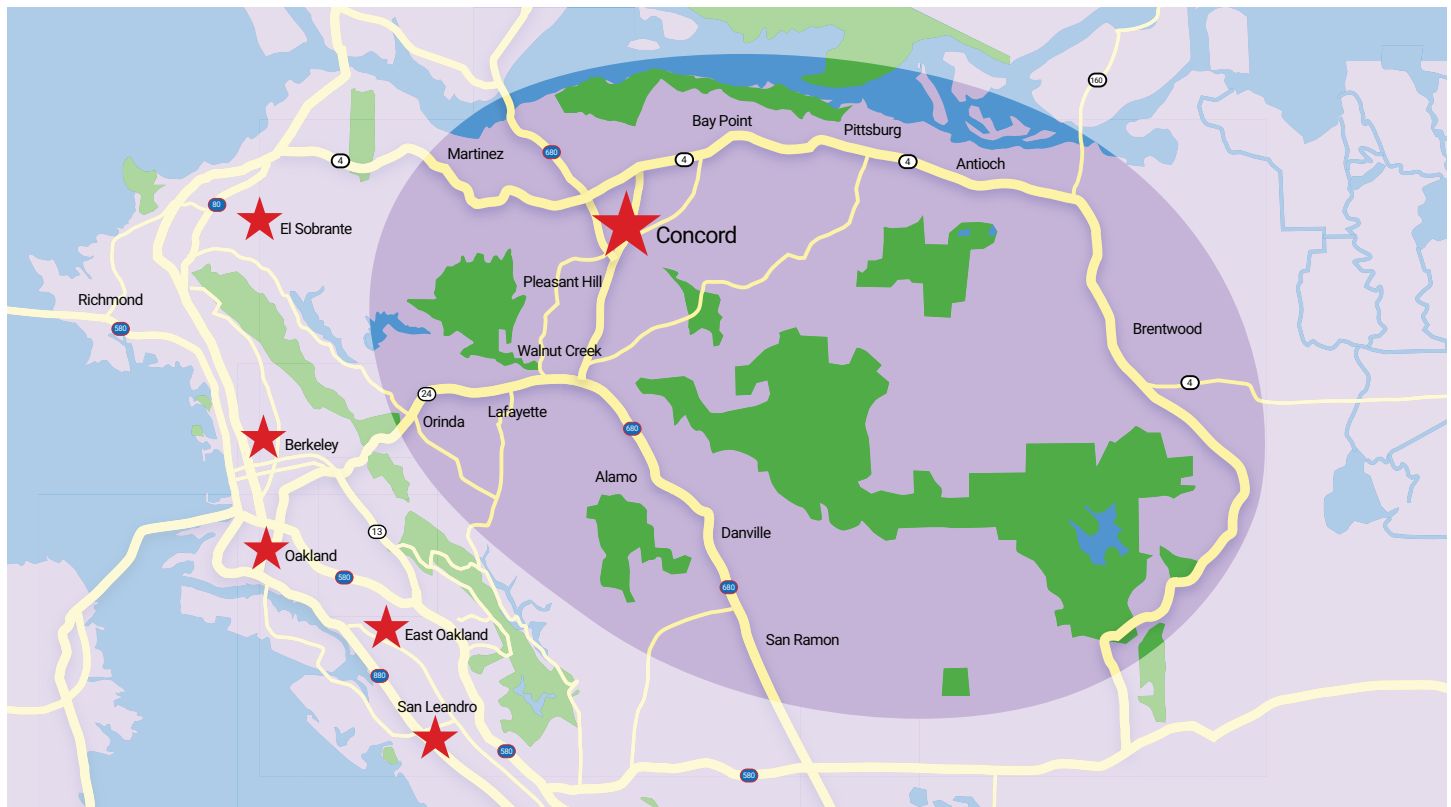
There were a number of key factors. CEI was one of the early PACE demonstration models. I appreciate that history and the long-term vision of CEI's board in recognizing the value of PACE. The board has been very supportive and welcoming. I really am enjoying getting to know them.

I was also attracted to the fact that CEI's primary focus is taking care of frail seniors through PACE. I strongly believe in the value of this model of care and the vision and mission of CEI really speaks to me.



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Contra Costa gets PACE services throughout the county



Center for Elders' Independence began our long commitment to Contra Costa County in 2000 when we first brought PACE services to West County residents. We are thrilled to now be able offer this program throughout the county, thanks to two new facilities.

When the long-term, beloved owners of Guardian Adult Day Health Center (ADHC) in El Sobrante retired, CEI purchased the program and built on Guardian's reputation as a great community resource. CEI invested in

renovating the space to give participants a beautiful new day center to enjoy.

And CEI's brand new PACE location in Central Contra Costa County is ready to open as well. Two years ago, CEI purchased an office building in Concord, then worked with the city and county to renovate it into a beautiful new PACE facility. CEI's Concord PACE will be able to serve over 500 residents of Central and East Contra Costa County.



These facilities enable more Contra Costa elders to finally access PACE services that have long been available to seniors in surrounding communities.

The new Concord PACE location features:

- ★ A spacious 3,132-square-foot, **state-of-the-art health clinic** with five exam rooms and one treatment room
- ★ A 4,600-square-foot **activity center for group exercise**, entertainment and celebrations, as well as break-out spaces for art projects, games, special interest clubs, and more
- ★ An ultramodern, spacious, 2,000-square-foot **fitness gym with cutting-edge equipment** and staffed with physical and occupational therapists
- ★ An **inviting dining room**, with culturally appealing food choices served in a restaurant-like atmosphere
- ★ A comfortable and secure **patio with beautiful landscaping**, seating, and space for outdoor activities
- ★ A **fully equipped computer lab** that includes low-vision keyboards and large monitors for those with vision challenges
- ★ A **spiritual room for faith-based activities** for all spiritual practices
- ★ Space for a **fleet of vans that provide safe rides** to and from the PACE center and all medical appointments



These facilities enable more Contra Costa elders to access PACE services that have long been available to seniors in surrounding communities. PACE integrates medical care with all needed support and services to keep elders living in their homes. Census estimates indicate that almost 4,000 county residents could potentially qualify for PACE services. And now they have that choice with CEI. We welcome anyone over 55 who lives in Contra Costa (or Alameda) County and is facing health challenges living at home as they age.

The Concord PACE center is scheduled to open April 1 and we are planning a virtual grand opening via Zoom for April 20 at 1 p.m. For an invitation, contact aadelaja@cei.elders.org or schedule a tour of the facility with the Center Director Emily Hoshida at 925-678-5231. ■



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The way our elders should be treated

Caregiver Profile

Nancy Mancini, a participant at East Oakland PACE, will tell you that her biggest accomplishment in life is raising her three children into healthy, caring, and functioning adults. Michael Mancini, her son, is most proud of being able to take care of his loving mom by getting her the care she needs as she ages.

Her life was “in a blender”

Ms. Mancini was an active part of her church in St. Petersburg, Florida, and loved to read, play trivia, and exercise. But when she had an aneurysm, her whole world was “put into a blender.” She had to give up everything and was no longer able to be active, go out to walk, or exercise.

In 2016, Michael and his wife moved back to Florida to help care for her. He says, “When we lived in Florida, there were constant issues every single day. The board and care my mom was living at yelled at her, overmedicated her, tried to put her into a psychiatric ward, and pureed food instead of feeding her (she can chew). Mostly they treated her like she didn’t matter, with no dignity and respect. She didn’t deserve that.”

You up for an adventure, Mom?

Seeing his mother take a turn for the worse, Michael asked her if she was up for an adventure. He proposed they move to Oakland where he had a community bond at his church and more support. She said yes and in 2018, the family took a leap of faith.

In Oakland, they didn’t know what to expect. The family needed help with Ms. Mancini’s care, so they found a board and care, but it was expensive and temporary.

In June 2018, Michael learned about CEI from the administrator at the assisted living facility where his mother was living. CEI’s enrollment team met Michael and Ms. Mancini and gave them information about more suitable facilities. In six weeks, she was in a new home and enrolled at CEI.

“Without CEI, we can’t manage her needs.”

CEI treats elders the way they should be treated

Michael was pleased that his mother’s needs were met immediately once she enrolled in CEI. He says, “There was no more pressure with people saying we’re not going to cover your medications, or the doctor’s going to dump your case. No more pressure in how she was going to get back and forth from the doctor. No more pressure in her meal plan. And there was no more abuse because we had a team of advocates that truly care for her well-being. Me and my wife can go on dates and not worry about her care because she is happy and loved.”

Ms. Mancini says, “Being a part of CEI has changed my life for the better.” Michael argues that it has changed her life dramatically. “Without CEI, we can’t manage her needs.

I was completely burnt out and I used to have to fight for her to get good care. But CEI treats our elders the way they should be treated.”

Michael and his mother continue their adventures every time they attend one of CEI’s outings. In 2019, at both the Valentine’s Day dance and the Annual Picnic, Michael said they had a blast together. “I just really appreciate everything. And my mom is still the same person who raised me, so it’s my pleasure to attend events. She has really been missing the staff and the center with COVID-19 and everything, but she’s still doing well.” ■



In 2019, at both the Valentine’s Day dance and the Annual Picnic, Michael said they had a blast together.

COVID Crushers

At CEI, we have nicknamed our staff and participants *COVID Crushers* because of the tremendous effort everyone has made toward building immunity against this virus. To date, CEI PACE clinics have administered 1,600 total doses of the Moderna vaccine. Our Clinical Operations team was able to administer 110 doses in a single day. We have reached an 80% vaccination rate for community-residing CEI participants and 73% for our staff – an incredible feat!

Happy participants and staff alike

CEI cares for one of the most vulnerable populations of older adults – those who live with multiple health challenges and qualify for nursing home-level of care. This is why our staff has worked tirelessly to be one of the first healthcare organizations in our region to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Many participants have told our staff that the vaccine is “life-changing” and they’ve also expressed gratitude for being part of something historic. Berkeley PACE participant Mr. John Moore told us, “CEI really makes my health better. COVID-19 is contagious and the best thing about the program is they offered the shot early to help us. We can be healthier and safer if people take the shot.”

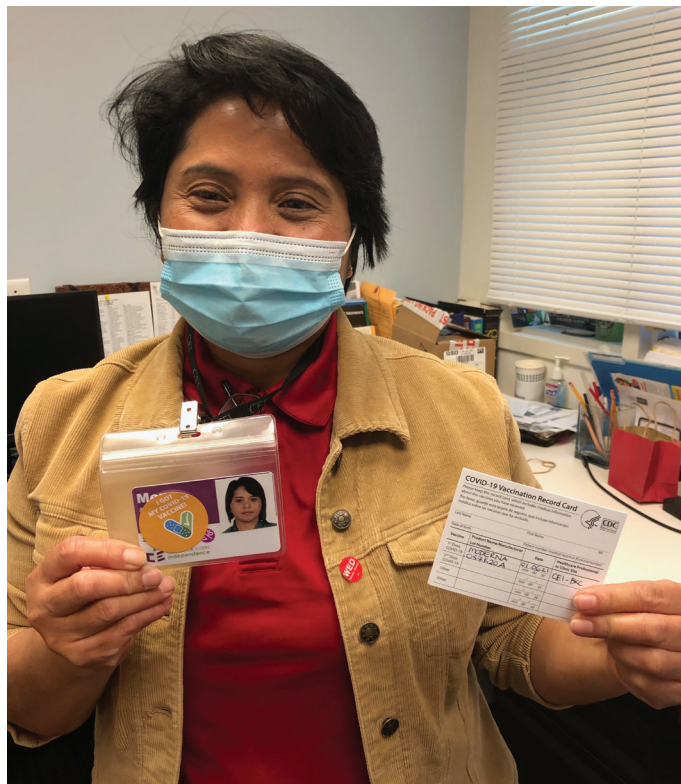
Preventing waste

CEI has been able to help prevent waste by pre-scheduling vaccinations in groups of 10. Recipients have remained flexible as to their vaccination site, and each person receiving the vaccine goes back to the same location for the second dose. In addition to our impressive vaccination rate, CEI’s Clinical Operations team has reported that staff and participants have tolerated the vaccine well.

Helping the community at large

According to County sources, the first doses for CEI participants residing in Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs) have been completed. CEI has offered to help with vaccinations in the community and the County will let us know if and how we are needed. ■

With our vaccination program, CEI is really living our tagline because we have just made many lives better!



Mona Leones, Activities Director at Berkeley PACE, received her first dose.



Mr. John Moore was excited to get his shot so he can build his immunity to COVID-19.

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A deeper commitment – JEDI council formed



Recent events have put a spotlight on racism and injustice, which are deeply embedded in our society and culture, having been present from the very founding of the United States. Economic disparities, police brutality, and structural racism have all been in our conversations and learning, and are top of mind for many of the staff here at Center for Elders' Independence.

To address these issues, CEI has put together the JEDI Council. JEDI stands for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – the primary areas this group will focus on. This council consists of staff from different positions throughout the company and will help deepen our commitment to being a leader on these important issues.

The JEDI Council aims to:

- ★ Build a vibrant, inclusive climate that brings people together across differences in backgrounds, experiences, and interests;
- ★ Improve hiring processes that tap into our communities and other talent pools;
- ★ Provide tools that assist in reaching and retaining our staff and participants;
- ★ Discover opportunities for learning and development, and outreach practices that improve the overall services we offer;
- ★ Increase CEI's ability to embrace change.

The Council meets to discuss strategy and implement new guidelines and best practices that create equal opportunities across the board for everyone regardless of gender, race, or orientation.

Catherine Johnson, CEI's VP of Human Resources says, "This Council is designed to improve how we relate to each other and operate. This is not about creating a great reading list. Books are a starting point but it's our actions, conversations and really hearing each other that will make

a true difference. We are at a point in our company where we can become even more inclusive with each other and our seniors."

Diversity is not something new to Center for Elders' Independence. The seniors we serve come from many different backgrounds, histories and traditions, as well as a multitude of ethnicities and languages. We strive to improve our ability to communicate in the preferred language of the participant through interpreters. Whether it's a phone call to our receptionist or teaching a class in Cantonese, communicating in different languages is vital to understanding, connection, and overall well-being.

Our staff is highly diverse as well. According to Catherine, our workforce of over 350 speaks 23 different languages besides English.

Senior Manager of Help Desk Support Jonathan Hagwood mentioned during Black History Month that, "I've never been part of a company that's as diverse as CEI, as inclusive as CEI. I'm very proud to work here."

Another job for the JEDI Council is looking at how we hire, promote and engage with each other, as well as the enrollment process for new seniors joining our program. The Council will look at things such as how we advertise and represent diverse groups in our photography, which languages we print materials and communications in, and all the many ways to celebrate the varied traditions we represent.

Here at CEI, we take the JEDI seriously. We are working hard to be the change we need in our communities. ■



CEI wins the *Best Home Health Care Provider*

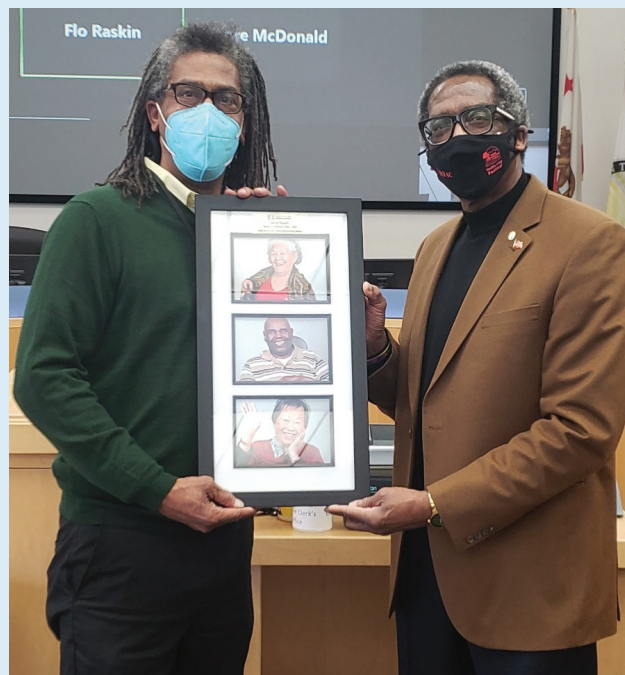
CEI is very pleased to learn that the East Bay community thinks our home health care is the best! In their annual "Best of the East Bay" issue, the East Bay Express readers chose Center for Elders' Independence as the Best Home Health Care Provider. Congratulations to our home care nurses and aides, who ensure CEI participants are treated with the love, care and respect they deserve. ■

CEI voted #1 in Home Care!

East Bay Express readers voted our home care team the best in the East Bay.

The community has spoken.
Homecare GAs and nurses at CEI create
a positive impact on seniors' lives.

THANK YOU FOR BEING THE BEST!!



CEI honors long-time board member

Center for Elders' Independence presented Darryl Stewart (left) with a CEI Outstanding Service award for his work over the past 18 years on the CEI governing board. Mr. Stewart is currently the Constituent Liaison and Organizer in the Office of County Supervisor Nate Miley, Fourth District (right). Thank you, Mr. Stewart, for all you do for seniors in Alameda County! ■

Meet CEI's new CEO

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Center for Elders' Independence has a really committed board and staff. It's going to be a pleasure to work with people who are so mission-driven.

What should we expect for the first 90 days?

I plan to spend much of my first 90 days learning the organization and observing. I think it is very important to listen. I view this time as a crash course in CEI.

I will also be getting to know the community. There are so many people and organizations I need to meet. It is one of the fun challenges about moving to a new area. It feels like there is a lot of opportunity.

What has surprised you about the Bay Area?

It's so green! I love to hike and I'm looking forward to exploring all the different hiking trails. I also like that there



are a lot of locally owned restaurants and shops so close by, which truly reflect the diversity of the area. I have lived in some more suburban environments with a lot of big box stores and chain restaurants. This suits me much better. ■



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Mission Statement

The Center for Elders' Independence provides high quality, affordable, integrated health care services to the elderly, which promote autonomy, quality of life and the ability of individuals to live in their communities.

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