



SAMS

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MONTHLY

NEWSLETTER



Care in Action
**Stories of Resilience,
Innovation, and Recovery**



Strengthening Emergency Care Following the Palmyra Highway Tragedy

A devastating road accident on the Palmyra–Al-Sukhnah highway in central Syria on July 25 left 35 people dead and another 35 injured, placing immediate pressure on hospitals already operating under the strain of years of conflict.

In the hours following the crash, SAMS coordinated with the Syrian Ministry of Health and the Health Directorates in Homs and Deir Ezzor to support the emergency response. Essential medicines and emergency medical supplies were delivered to hospitals treating the injured, helping frontline healthcare workers meet the sudden surge in demand for trauma care.

Among the facilities at the center of the response was Tadmur Hospital, the closest hospital to the accident site. For years, healthcare facilities across central Syria have faced shortages of equipment, infrastructure, and specialized emergency resources, limiting their ability to respond to large-scale emergencies despite the dedication of their medical teams.

To strengthen the hospital's emergency response capacity, SAMS has committed up to \$75,000 in support for critical improvements to Tadmur Hospital's emergency department. The investment is intended to enhance the hospital's ability to provide timely trauma care, not only during major incidents but also for the communities it serves every day.



The organization is also establishing an emergency response fund while coordinating additional medical supplies, ambulance support, and patient assistance across Homs and Deir Ezzor. These efforts are designed to address the immediate consequences of the tragedy while strengthening the region's preparedness for future emergencies.



The response reflects a broader reality facing Syria's healthcare system: even as the country moves toward recovery, unexpected crises continue to test hospitals operating with limited resources. Investments in emergency preparedness, trauma care, and resilient health infrastructure remain essential to ensuring that

healthcare providers can respond swiftly when lives are at stake.

As families mourn those lost in the accident and survivors begin the road to recovery, SAMS continues to work alongside local health authorities to reinforce emergency medical services and help ensure that hospitals are better equipped when every second counts.



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SAMS Meets UN Secretary-General António Guterres to Advance Syrian-Led Recovery

DAMASCUS, Syria — As Syria confronts the challenges of rebuilding after more than a decade of conflict, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) urged the international community to place Syrian organizations at the center of the country's recovery during a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.

Representing the Syrian NGO Alliance as its chair, SAMS met with Guterres to advocate for greater recognition and investment in Syrian-led humanitarian and development efforts. The discussion focused on the role that local and diaspora organizations have played throughout the conflict and the need for those same organizations to help shape Syria's next chapter.

For more than 15 years, Syrian civil society organizations have delivered healthcare, emergency relief, and other essential services in communities where access was often limited or nonexistent. Their work, SAMS leaders said, has demonstrated not only operational capacity but also a deep understanding of the needs of the populations they serve.

As humanitarian priorities increasingly shift toward long-term recovery, SAMS emphasized that rebuilding Syria will require more than financial support. It called for a model of localization that gives national and diaspora organizations meaningful participation in decision-making, equitable partnerships with international actors, and direct access to resources.

The meeting reflected a broader conversation taking place across the humanitarian sector about how recovery efforts should be designed and who should lead them. Advocates of localization argue that organizations rooted in affected communities are often best positioned to deliver sustainable solutions and strengthen public institutions over time.

SAMS reaffirmed its commitment to working alongside Syrian civil society, international partners, and the United Nations to help rebuild resilient health systems and expand access to essential services. The organization said lasting recovery will depend on ensuring that Syrian expertise, leadership, and experience remain at the forefront of the country's reconstruction efforts.

SAMS and UNFPA Open Two New Women's Protection and Support Centers in Syria

As humanitarian needs continue across Syria, access to safe, specialized services remains critical for women and girls facing heightened risks of violence, displacement, and limited healthcare. To help address these challenges, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has launched two Women's Protection and Support Centers in the governorates of Latakia and As-Suwayda.

The centers provide safe and confidential spaces where women and girls can access integrated services designed to support both their immediate and long-term well-being. Available services include protection support, gender-based violence prevention and awareness sessions, case management, psychosocial counseling, and sexual and reproductive healthcare.



Beyond providing essential services, the centers are intended to foster trust, safety, and resilience. Women and girls can seek assistance in an environment where confidentiality is prioritized and specialized staff are equipped to respond to their individual needs with compassion and care.

For survivors of violence and others facing vulnerability, access to coordinated support can be a critical step toward recovery. By bringing protection, mental health, and reproductive health services together under one roof, the centers aim to reduce barriers to care while strengthening community-based support networks.

The initiative reflects a broader effort to expand locally accessible, patient-centered services in underserved communities. As Syria continues to navigate complex humanitarian and recovery challenges, investments in protection and healthcare for women and girls remain an essential component of rebuilding stronger, healthier communities.

Through the new centers in Latakia and As-Suwayda, SAMS continues to strengthen access to comprehensive care, helping ensure that women and girls have the resources, support, and dignity they need to move forward.



A First for Syria: Advancing Autism Care Through Specialized Training

In a landmark step toward strengthening autism care and specialized education in Syria, the University of Damascus and the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) have signed an agreement to establish a Master's Program in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) within the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Education.



As the first program of its kind in Syria, this initiative will create a new pathway for professionals to receive advanced training in ABA and prepare students to pursue certification through the Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis Credentialing Board (QABA).

The program aims to address the growing need for qualified specialists trained in the assessment and intervention of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disorders. By equipping future professionals with evidence-based skills and internationally aligned training, the program will help expand access to high-quality services for children, families, and individuals with developmental needs.

Beyond autism care, Applied Behavior Analysis is a versatile field that supports progress across multiple areas, including mental health, education, rehabilitation, and early intervention.

Its applications can help improve learning, communication, independence, and overall quality of life for individuals across different stages of development.

This partnership between the University of Damascus and SAMS represents a significant investment in Syria's healthcare and education systems—building national expertise, strengthening specialized care, and laying the foundation for a more inclusive future for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities.



A Fragile Beginning, a Second Chance: Baby Anas's Journey to Recovery

For newborns facing critical health challenges, the first hours of life can determine the course of their future. Baby Anas arrived at Omar Bin Abdul Aziz Hospital in Aleppo on his second day of life in urgent condition, requiring immediate medical attention after being transferred from another facility.

When he reached the hospital, Anas was experiencing severe respiratory distress, with oxygen saturation levels at a dangerously low 45%. Following a comprehensive evaluation, the medical team diagnosed him with pulmonary hypertension and a patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), conditions that required rapid intervention and specialized neonatal care.

The team immediately began lifesaving treatment, providing cardiac and respiratory support, including intubation and mechanical ventilation to help stabilize Anas' breathing and give his body the time it needed to recover.

For one week, Anas remained under close observation in the Neonatal and Premature Infant Intensive Care Unit (NICU), where physicians and nurses provided continuous monitoring and specialized care. With careful treatment and timely intervention, his condition steadily improved, allowing him to successfully transition away from ventilator support.

Anas' recovery highlights the critical role of specialized newborn care and the difference that timely access to advanced medical services can make during a child's most vulnerable moments. Behind every successful recovery is a team of healthcare professionals dedicated to protecting the lives of newborns and supporting families through some of their most difficult days.

Through its hospitals and medical programs, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) continues to strengthen access to lifesaving care for mothers and children, helping give more newborns the opportunity for a healthier start.



Witnessing Impact on the Ground: SAMS Executive Director Visits Lebanon Programs

During a recent visit to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, SAMS' Executive Director David Lillie met with staff, patients, and families to observe firsthand how community-based healthcare programs are improving the lives of vulnerable populations.

The visit offered a closer look at SAMS' integrated approach to care, which combines primary healthcare, mental health services, and community outreach to address the complex needs of refugees and underserved communities. Throughout the day, Lillie met with adolescents participating in the organization's mental health and psychosocial support programs, where young people shared how counseling and structured activities have helped them build confidence, strengthen resilience, and better cope with the challenges of displacement and uncertainty.

He also spoke with caregivers, who described the positive impact these services have had on their families. Their experiences underscored the importance of accessible mental health support, not only for individuals, but for strengthening family relationships and fostering healthier community environments.

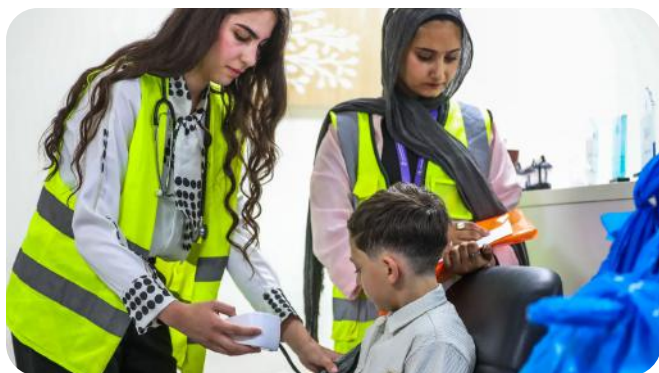
A key stop on the visit was the SAMS Mobile Medical Unit, which delivers essential healthcare to internally displaced persons and other communities with limited access to medical services. By bringing care directly to patients, the mobile unit provides primary healthcare consultations, medications, mental health and psychosocial support, and referrals for specialized treatment, helping bridge critical gaps in access.

The visit concluded with discussions between Lillie and the Bekaa team on program achievements, operational challenges, and opportunities to expand services in response to evolving humanitarian needs. The conversations reflected a shared commitment to strengthening community-based healthcare models that prioritize accessibility, continuity of care, and patient-centered services.

As humanitarian needs persist across Lebanon, SAMS continues to invest in programs that bring healthcare closer to the people who need it most, pairing medical care with psychosocial support and community engagement to help individuals and families build healthier, more resilient futures.

Empowering Children with Type 1 Diabetes in Jordan

For children living with Type 1 diabetes, effective disease management depends on more than insulin alone. Daily blood glucose monitoring, access to essential medical supplies, and a strong understanding of the condition are all critical to maintaining long-term health. Yet for many families, obtaining these resources remains a persistent challenge.



To help close that gap, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) Jordan, with support from Life for a Child, has launched a new initiative aimed at strengthening diabetes care for children and equipping families with the tools and knowledge needed to manage the condition with confidence.

The program provides children with blood glucose monitoring devices and other essential diabetes management supplies, helping families maintain consistent daily care and reduce barriers to effective treatment. Alongside medical resources, caregivers and children participate in educational sessions focused on Type 1 diabetes, nutrition, and practical disease management strategies that support healthier routines at home.



By pairing medical supplies with education, the initiative recognizes that successful diabetes care relies on informed families as much as accessible healthcare. Understanding how to monitor blood sugar levels, make nutritional decisions, and respond to changes in a child's condition can improve health outcomes while giving families greater confidence in managing everyday challenges.



The partnership reflects SAMS' broader commitment to strengthening care for children with chronic illnesses through sustainable, community-based programs. As access to specialized healthcare remains uneven for many vulnerable populations, initiatives that combine treatment, education, and long-term support play an important role in helping children lead healthier, more independent lives.



Through its collaboration with Life for a Child, SAMS Jordan continues to expand access to quality diabetes care, ensuring that children living with Type 1 diabetes have the support and resources they need to thrive.

SAMS Opens Al-Zaytoun Medical Point in Gaza

As communities across Gaza continue to face immense healthcare challenges, SAMS is expanding its efforts to ensure that families have access to essential medical services close to home. The organization recently opened the Al-Zaytoun Medical Point in the Al-Zaytoun neighborhood of eastern Gaza City, strengthening access to comprehensive primary healthcare for residents in northern Gaza.



The newly established medical point serves as a critical resource for individuals and families by providing a wide range of integrated health services, including:

- Primary healthcare services for adults, children, and women, addressing common illnesses, urgent health needs, and routine medical care.
- Sexual and reproductive health services, including antenatal care, maternal health support, and family planning services to help women access safe and timely care.
- Chronic disease diagnosis and management, ensuring patients with conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and other long-term illnesses receive continued medical support.
- Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to help individuals and families navigate the emotional and psychological impacts of ongoing crisis.

By combining medical treatment with mental health support, the Al-Zaytoun Medical Point reflects SAMS' commitment to a holistic, patient-centered approach to healthcare, one that addresses the full needs of communities, especially during times of prolonged hardship.



Through this expansion, SAMS continues to bring lifesaving services closer to families across northern Gaza, providing not only essential healthcare but also a sense of stability, dignity, and hope for those who need it most.



- Xerostomia
- Periodontal disease
- Oral and esophageal candidiasis, 3-5 folds
- Burning mouth syndrome/Clonazepam

Mauri-Obradors 2017; ADA 2026



Advancing Diabetes Care at Douma National Hospital

As Syria rebuilds its healthcare system, medical education has become an essential component of strengthening the country's clinical workforce. Through its ongoing medical education initiatives, SAMS is connecting Syrian physicians with experts from around the world to promote the exchange of knowledge and support high-quality patient care.

professionals, and contribute to rebuilding medical capacity. For Dr. Salam, the visit marked his fourth post-liberation medical mission, reflecting an ongoing commitment to supporting colleagues in Syria through education and collaboration.

Beyond presenting recent clinical developments,



As part of this effort, Dr. Maher Salam, a U.S.-based gastroenterologist, delivered a scientific lecture at Douma National Hospital in the Rif-Dimashq (Rural Damascus) Governorate of Syria, focusing on the relationship between diabetes and gastrointestinal health. The session explored the latest evidence on digestive complications associated with diabetes and current approaches to diagnosis and management, providing physicians with updates on evolving clinical practices.

Dr. Salam emphasized the importance of lifelong learning in medicine. As research and treatment guidelines continue to evolve, continuous professional education enables physicians to integrate evidence-based practices into patient care and improve health outcomes.

The lecture was part of SAMS' Return and Rebuild Mission, an initiative that brings members of the Syrian medical diaspora back to Syria to share specialized expertise, mentor local healthcare

By fostering collaboration between Syrian healthcare providers and internationally trained specialists, SAMS is helping strengthen the country's medical workforce while encouraging the exchange of knowledge across borders. The organization's medical education programs are designed to support sustainable improvements in healthcare by investing in the people who will shape Syria's health system for years to come.

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Reflecting on this month's stories, from healing in Syria to hope in Gaza, it's clear that our united efforts are making a greater difference than ever.

But the work is far from over.

Whether you're a healthcare professional, advocate, or supporter, you have a role to play in advancing our mission of delivering dignified, high-quality care to communities in crisis.

Here's how you can stay engaged:



Donate to support emergency relief and medical care:
sams-usa.net/donate



Volunteer your time and expertise:
sams-usa.net/volunteer



Advocate by amplifying our message and engaging with policymakers

*Thank you for being part of the SAMS family.
Together, we are healing, rebuilding, and
inspiring hope.*

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