

Prop. 409: Why its passage is vitally needed

By Deacon Martha Seaman, Guest Writer | Oct 19, 2025



Valley Interfaith Project is a broad-based, non-partisan organization of churches, unions and non-profit associations committed to building power for sustainable social and economic development change.

As leaders of these faith communities in Maricopa County, we write to express our strong support for Proposition 409.

This measure, which authorizes bonds to fund critical improvements for Valleywise Health in Maricopa County, aligns with the core principles of compassion, dignity, and care that are central to our faith traditions.

We, and those with whom we share ministry, hear the person grieving the loss of a family member to the streets or suicide, the parents frantic to find mental health providers for their children, those needing basic health care or coping with catastrophic injury.

“Having worked in the mental health field, I have a clear understanding of the continued need for affordable mental health care for all of our citizens.

“There are too few providers for both inpatient and outpatient services” states Rev. Sandy Johnson of Red Mountain United Methodist Church.

Leaders in Valley Interfaith Project have worked for decades on efforts to expand access to healthcare and behavioral health treatment and have heard hundreds of stories of affected families.

For generations, Valleywise Health has served as a beacon of hope and a safety net for our most vulnerable neighbors. It is a place where every person, regardless of their background or circumstance, can find quality medical care.

However, as our county’s population has grown, so has the demand on our healthcare infrastructure—especially for behavioral and mental health services.

“High quality, affordable and accessible health care that includes mental and behavioral health care is a cornerstone for healthy, thriving communities and a necessary foundation for spiritual well-being,” says Rev. Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, senior minister of Valley Unitarian Universalist.

Proposition 409 is a compassionate and just response to this urgent need. It will authorize a crucial investment to:

Replace and expand the aging behavioral health annex with a modern, 200-bed hospital, effectively doubling the capacity for those experiencing serious mental illness.

Modernize and expand emergency and trauma departments, ensuring victims and first responders receive timely and specialized care.

Improve access to care in underserved communities by building new outpatient specialty centers and health clinics.

Our faith traditions teach that we are called to care for the sick, comfort the distressed, and love our neighbor. Investing in robust healthcare infrastructure, particularly for mental and behavioral health, is a practical and powerful way to live out these values.

As Bishop John Dolan of the Catholic Diocese of Phoenix states: “These are not just health investments, they reflect our shared duty to care for one another and respect for the dignity of all human life. Let us come together, in faith and solidarity, to lift up our neighbors.”

For these reasons, we urge our fellow community members to vote “yes” on Proposition 409. Let us invest in the well-being of our neighbors and build a stronger, more resilient Maricopa County for future generations.

Deacon Martha Seaman is president of the Valley Interfaith project.