



SAMS

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MONTHLY

NEWSLETTER



**A New Era for
Syrian Healthcare
*One Year After Liberation***

One Year After Liberation: A Message to Our Community

To our fellow Syrians everywhere,

To our esteemed supporters,

To my colleagues, our heroes, the SAMS members and SAMS staff, and to our partners in humanitarian service,

As we mark one year since the liberation of Syria, we reflect on a period shaped by challenge, resilience, and collective achievement.

Throughout this past year, SAMS remained steadfast in its mission. We stood with our people, continued to deliver high-quality healthcare, and worked to build a capable medical workforce across the country.

SAMS conducted numerous medical missions that reached Syrian communities most in need, providing care to thousands of patients and performing advanced surgical interventions that restored health and dignity.

We continued to invest in capacity building through structured medical education programs, workshops, and simulation training. With our SAMS Medical Education platform, we ensure that medical students, residents, and other medical professionals have access to the most current knowledge and clinical skills.

Believing in a strong, resilient, and sustainable healthcare system for Syria, we opened and supported a wide range of specialized centers—including chronic disease facilities, oncology centers,



advanced cardiac centers, mental health programs, mobile clinics, and advanced treatment units—to meet evolving community needs and strengthen long-term service delivery.

These accomplishments were made possible only through your trust, support, and partnership.

To every physician, nurse, volunteer, and donor who stood with us, to the families of volunteers who supported the medical missions—thank you.

As we enter a new year of rebuilding and supporting medical services across Syria, SAMS renews its commitment to stand with our people, support the health of communities, and continue shaping a future where every Syrian has access to care and dignity.

Syria deserves life and we will continue working to build for Syria's future.

May the coming years bring peace, stability, and prosperity to Syria and to all Syrians.

With appreciation and respect,

Dr. Aref Rifai

Dr. Aref Rifai
President, Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)



SAMS Chapter Events Celebrate Syria's Liberation

Throughout Syria Liberation Month, SAMS chapters across the country came together to mark a historic milestone for Syria and to celebrate the resilience, progress, and hope shaping its future. Each gathering reflected the strength of our community and the growing impact of our collective work.

On December 6, the SAMS Texas Chapter hosted a powerful evening in Dallas commemorating the first anniversary of Syria's liberation, welcoming over 600 attendees. The program featured remarks from Minister Hind Kabawat and Minister Raed Al-Saleh, reflections from SAMS President Dr. Aref Rifai, recognition of Dr. Wareef Kabbani for his distinguished service, and youth innovation highlights through the Beam Noor Venture Creativity Competition—honoring both past sacrifices and future leadership.

The SAMS Michigan Annual Gala brought together nearly 500 members of the SAMS community and raised over \$400,000 in pledged donations to support our lifesaving mission. The evening included special remarks from Michigan Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II, inspiring performances, and the presentation of the SAMS Humanitarian Award to Mr. Omar Haydar for his critical contributions to medical supply logistics.

On the same night, close to 500 attendees gathered for the SAMS Midwest 18th Annual Gala in the Chicago suburbs. Under the theme “Syria Reborn:

A Brighter Future for Generations to Come,” the evening featured remarks from Chapter President Dr. Ibrahim Kassas and a keynote address by Mr. Qutaiba Idlibi, along with updates on SAMS’ programs and impact. In a powerful show of support, the community raised over \$1 million in one night to support the Al-Afiah Hospital and expand SAMS’ lifesaving oncology services. Honorees included Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh, the Deir Ezzor Team, and Mr. Abdulwahab Omira. Cultural performances closed the night, celebrating Syrian resilience and renewal.

Together, these gatherings reflected the spirit of Syria Liberation Month—affirming our shared commitment to healing communities, rebuilding systems, and supporting a future shaped by dignity, self-determination, and hope.

Thank you to all who made these moments possible. We look forward to continue building on our mission together.





Your Impact: Healing Across Syria in 2025

For years, Syrians throughout the country endured unimaginable suffering—hospitals destroyed, families displaced, and medical teams stretched beyond their limits. Access to care was scarce, and daily life was a struggle.

This year, your generosity helped write a new chapter. For the first time in SAMS history, we delivered life-saving care across all of Syria, reaching communities long cut off from stable healthcare.

Together, we rebuilt access to treatment, restored hope, and ensured Syrians could receive care close to home. Thanks to you, SAMS delivered critical impact across Syria in 2025, including:

- 65+ health centers providing essential care
- 64,000+ hospitalizations with urgent and specialized treatment
- 25,800+ cancer patients supported with life-saving care
- 22,700+ babies delivered safely, including C-sections
- 13,500+ dialysis sessions for chronic kidney patients
- and so much more



These numbers represent families finding care, mothers delivering safely, and patients continuing treatment without interruption.

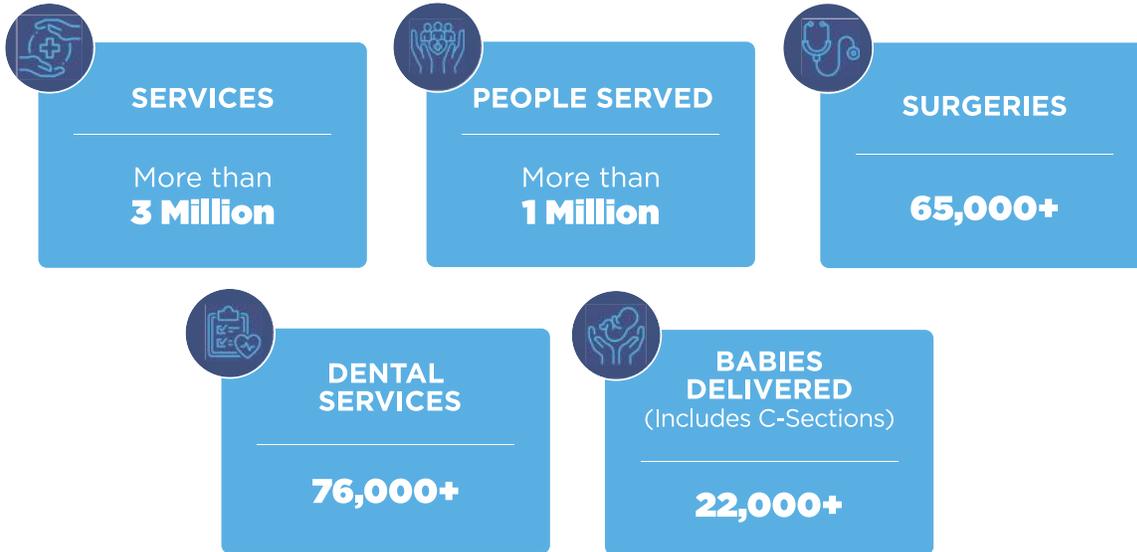
Together, we are helping lay the foundation for Syria Health 2030 — a bold vision to rebuild a resilient, accessible, and high-quality healthcare system across the country. Your support is shaping a future where every Syrian, in every community, can count on dependable care and renewed hope for a healthier tomorrow.

Thank you for standing with the Syrian people and helping build a future defined by healing and dignity.

Your Compassion Reached Millions in 2025

As 2025 comes to an end, we are honored to share the healing you made possible. Your compassion empowered SAMS teams to deliver lifesaving care to communities across six countries, including Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, and Greece, reaching families who had nowhere else to turn.

Thanks to you, this year we supported:



These numbers represent far more than services, they represent dignity restored, families supported, and lives given a second chance. Thank you for making this extraordinary impact possible.

As we look toward 2026, millions across the region, especially in Syria, are still waiting for the care they desperately need. Your generosity today helps us continue reaching patients, strengthening hospitals, and advancing our Syria Health 2030 vision to renew hope across Syria and beyond.

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In December, seven children in Syria underwent cochlear implant surgeries over three days.

From Silence to Sound: Closing 2025 with Hope

As 2025 comes to a close, seven children in Syria underwent life-changing cochlear implant surgeries over the course of three days, unlocking access to sound for the very first time. For these children and their families, the procedures marked a profound turning point—one that extended far beyond the operating room.

With the support of the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) and a dedicated medical team, these surgeries created a bridge from silence to sound, from isolation to connection, and from years of waiting to new possibility. For children who had never heard a voice, laughter, or music, the promise of sound represents the beginning of a transformed childhood.

These procedures are not the end of the journey, but the start of a longer path that includes rehabilitation, follow-up care, and ongoing family support. Each successful surgery reflects SAMS' commitment to restoring not only health, but dignity, opportunity, and hope.

As SAMS looks ahead to the year to come, these moments stand as a powerful reminder that even after years of crisis, progress continues. In the months ahead, more children will hear their first words, experience shared laughter, and connect more fully with the world around them—carrying hope forward into the new year.

Restoring Hearing and Opportunity: Cochlear Implant Program for Children in Idlib

Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh, together with a specialized medical team at Al-Zira'a Hospital in Idlib, recently oversaw the careful selection of fourteen children for participation in a cochlear implant program. Each child was evaluated using strict medical criteria to ensure the highest likelihood of success, reflecting SAMS' commitment to responsible, patient-centered care.

Cochlear implantation is a highly specialized procedure that offers children with severe hearing loss the chance to communicate, learn, and engage more fully with the world around them. For many of these children, hearing loss has created barriers to education, social interaction, and development—challenges that this program directly seeks to address.

Beyond the surgical procedure itself, the program emphasizes comprehensive care, including preoperative assessments, postoperative follow-up, and long-term rehabilitation. This approach

ensures that each child receives the support needed to maximize outcomes and integrate hearing into everyday life.

This initiative represents more than a medical intervention. It offers families renewed hope and children a pathway toward confidence, connection, and independence—affirming SAMS' belief that access to advanced care can transform lives and futures.



Sustaining Care and Compassion in Al-Nuseirat Camp, Gaza

In Al-Nuseirat Camp in Gaza, SAMS continues its humanitarian mission to support some of the most vulnerable communities affected by prolonged crisis and displacement. Amid challenging conditions, SAMS teams are delivering essential medical services while also addressing the deep social and psychological needs faced by patients and their families.

Daily care extends beyond clinical treatment to include psychosocial support that helps individuals cope with trauma, stress, and uncertainty. By integrating medical and emotional care, SAMS works to restore dignity and resilience within families navigating extraordinary hardship.

The team's presence offers stability in an unstable environment, ensuring that patients are not left without care even as resources remain limited. Each consultation, referral, and support session reflects a commitment to sustained engagement rather than short-term intervention.



Through consistency, compassion, and professionalism, SAMS continues to stand with Gaza's communities—keeping hope alive and reinforcing the principle that quality healthcare is a human right, even in the most difficult circumstances.

Protecting Smiles and Futures: Dental Care for Children in Rural Morocco

The SAMS Dental Mission in Tighedouine, Morocco continues to make a meaningful and lasting impact on children's oral health in underserved rural communities. To date, 1,254 children between the ages of 4 and 16 have received comprehensive dental care focused on prevention, pain relief, and infection management.

Services provided include oral hygiene education for both children and caregivers, fluoride varnish and silver diamine fluoride applications, and safe extractions under local anesthesia for children experiencing pain or abscesses. Each intervention is delivered with care and attention to minimizing discomfort while restoring health.



In addition to clinical treatment, every child receives a toothbrush and toothpaste to encourage healthy habits at home. For complex cases requiring advanced care, referrals are arranged to ensure continuity and long-term treatment beyond the mission.

By combining prevention, education, and timely intervention, this mission helps protect children from dental disease and its long-term consequences—supporting healthier childhoods, stronger confidence, and brighter futures, one smile at a time.



Strengthening Healthcare Infrastructure: Al-Afiah Hospital Partnership

In mid-December, SAMS and the Union of Charitable Associations signed a partnership agreement to fully rehabilitate and equip Al-Afiah Hospital in Damascus. Once completed, the facility will offer a wide range of specialized medical services and serve as a hub for advanced medical education and training.

During the signing ceremony, leaders highlighted the importance of collaboration and patient-centered partnerships in rebuilding a resilient healthcare system. The agreement reflects a shared commitment to strengthening institutions that communities depend on.

The ceremony was attended by Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh, Dr. Abdelfattah Elshaar, Chair of the Board, and Executive Director David Lillie—underscoring SAMS’ leadership role in advancing sustainable healthcare solutions.



At a time when reliable healthcare remains critically needed, this initiative is designed to expand access to high-quality care for communities across Syria. The project emphasizes both service delivery and workforce development to ensure long-term impact.



SAMS Jordan Expands Comprehensive Healthcare Services in Zaatari Camp

In Zaatari Camp, SAMS continues to provide integrated healthcare services to refugees, including pediatric care, dental treatments, ophthalmology, and public health programming. These services ensure that every resident receives essential care, even in challenging circumstances.

SAMS' team focuses on preventive services, education, and chronic disease management. By addressing both acute and long-term health needs, the program promotes overall well-being and strengthens community resilience.

Through its ongoing presence in Zaatari Camp, SAMS demonstrates a commitment to equity, access, and compassionate care for all residents, ensuring that no one is left behind.



SAMS Participates in the National Disability Conference in Damascus

SAMS participated in the National Disability Conference titled “Empowerment, Inclusion, and Integration,” co-organized by Damascus University and UNFPA. The two-day conference brought together academic institutions, government representatives, and civil society organizations to address disability through inclusive and rights-based approaches.



Dr. Hussam Al-Lahham, SAMS Program Manager, presented on health challenges faced by women living with disability and displacement, highlighting gaps in access to care and the importance of inclusive health systems. His presentation emphasized the need for policies and programs that respond to intersecting vulnerabilities.

SAMS also took part in an educational inclusion workshop that used virtual reality technology to simulate visual and hearing impairments. The experience offered participants a deeper understanding of accessibility challenges and reinforced the importance of inclusive design in education and public spaces.

Through its participation, SAMS reaffirmed its commitment to promoting dignity, inclusion, and equitable healthcare access—ensuring that people with disabilities are not only supported, but meaningfully included in systems designed to serve them.



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16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

From November 25 to December 10, SAMS led a series of initiatives in Syria as part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, supported by UNFPA. The program engaged women ages 15–40 through awareness sessions, psychosocial support, and interactive workshops.

Events were held at Qah and Idlib Maternity Hospitals, offering safe spaces for women and girls to learn about their rights, prevention strategies, and support resources. The campaign emphasized empowerment, protection, and community engagement, ensuring that participants leave equipped to advocate for themselves and others.

This initiative highlights SAMS' holistic approach to humanitarian care, addressing both medical and social determinants of health, and building stronger, more resilient communities across Syria.



Strengthening Leadership and Quality in Healthcare Delivery

SAMS organized an advanced training workshop on quality improvement and operational leadership, bringing together healthcare leadership teams from across Syria. The workshop was attended by senior leadership including Dr. Mufaddal Hamadeh, Dr. Abdelfattah Elshaar, and Executive Director David Lillie.



Led by Dr. Bachir Tajaldin, the training included participants from Omar Bin Abdulaziz Hospital, the SAMS Cardiac Hospital, and the SAMS Syria Office. Directors, department heads, nursing supervisors, and quality officers engaged in practical, systems-focused learning.

Modules covered integrated quality management, improvement tools, development of action plans, clinical governance, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Participants worked collaboratively to address real operational challenges.

This initiative reflects SAMS' commitment to building strong internal systems that support safe, effective, and sustainable healthcare delivery across its network.

Field Visits to Strengthen Care in Aleppo and Idlib

A SAMS delegation led by Dr. Abdelfattah Elshaar and Executive Director David Lillie conducted field visits to Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz Hospital and the Emirates Hospital in Aleppo, as well as Al-Zira'a Hospital in Idlib.

The visits aimed to assess facility conditions, evaluate healthcare needs, and identify opportunities to strengthen support for medical staff working in underserved areas. Direct engagement with frontline teams allowed for informed planning and responsive decision-making.

Delegation members reviewed services, discussed challenges with hospital leadership, and explored strategies to improve quality of care and operational efficiency.

These visits reflect SAMS' hands-on approach to healthcare improvement—ensuring that strategic decisions are grounded in on-the-ground realities and community needs.



A Milestone for Inclusion: The SAMS Autism Academy

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and as the closing event of Autism Scientific Week at Damascus University, SAMS celebrated the opening of the SAMS Autism Academy—the first center of its kind in Syria.



The inauguration was attended by representatives from Damascus University, the Ministry of Higher Education, and regional health directorates, including senior officials recognizing the academy’s national significance.

What began as a shared dream among physicians, specialists, families, and volunteers has become a tangible reality focused on improving autism services nationwide. The academy represents a collaborative effort rooted in compassion and expertise.

Supervised by Dr. Shaden Kassar, Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, the academy aims to train specialists in Applied Behavior Analysis and offer internationally recognized certifications—marking a pioneering step toward inclusive, high-quality autism care in Syria.



Building Critical Care Skills: POCUS Training in Homs

The SAMS Institute, in collaboration with Albirr Hospital, launched an advanced postgraduate training program titled POCAS at Albirr Hospital in Homs. Designed for physicians managing critical cases, the program focused on enhancing readiness through point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) and emerging artificial intelligence applications.

According to Dr. Ibtisam Zahraa, the training covered essential practical modules including cardiac, abdominal, and vascular ultrasound, FAST and E-FAST applications, and trauma assessment. Participants gained hands-on experience tailored to

real-world emergency and critical care scenarios.

For the first time in Homs, the program introduced high-fidelity virtual ultrasound simulators, allowing physicians to practice repeatedly in a safe, controlled environment without risk to patients. This innovation significantly enhanced skill development and confidence among participants.

By addressing long-standing training gaps and strengthening clinical competencies, the SAMS Institute continues to invest in the medical workforce—directly improving patient outcomes and elevating standards of care across Syria.

Advancing a New Era of Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery in Syria

Under the supervision of cardiac surgeon Dr. Hazaim Alwair, the SAMS Institute is leading a specialized initiative to advance minimally invasive cardiac surgery in Syria, introducing some of the most advanced techniques in modern cardiac care. These procedures avoid median sternotomy, significantly reducing patient pain, shortening recovery times, and lowering the risk of complications.

The initiative focuses on sustainable capacity-building through a combination of simulation-based surgical training, equipping SAMS hospitals with specialized cardiac equipment, and structured cross-training for medical professionals. Together, these efforts are designed to strengthen long-term surgical expertise and institutional readiness.

These investments have already led to a major milestone at the SAMS Cardiac Surgery Hospital in Idlib, where a new minimally invasive cardiac surgery technique was successfully performed for the first

time. Led by Dr. Alwair, the trained surgical team applied the procedure on a patient from Quneitra, marking a transformative advancement for cardiac care in northern Syria.

This achievement reflects years of preparation, collaboration, and commitment to excellence—bringing global standards of cardiac care closer to patients who need them most. It represents a significant step forward in SAMS' mission to deliver safe, advanced healthcare services and elevate standards of care nationwide.



[Watch the video](#)



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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:
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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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