

- Good afternoon, today is Friday, May 29, 2020. My name is Michelle Shoresman, and thank you for watching today's San Luis Obispo County COVID-19 media briefing. This afternoon, we have two speakers for you. We will begin today with San Luis Obispo County Library Director Chris Barnickel, and he will be followed by County Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein. County Administrative Officer and Emergency Services Director Wade Horton is also here and available to take questions if needed. Thank you to our American Sign Language interpreter Shelly Lawrence, and now San Luis Obispo County Library Director Chris Barnickel.

- Good afternoon, Chris Barnickel, County of San Luis Obispo Library Director. I'm pleased to announce that beginning Monday January 1st all San Luis Obispo County library cardholders will be able to place holds on materials and will be available for pickup on Tuesday June 2nd at any one of our three regional locations, San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, or Arroyo Grande public libraries. For more information, you can go to the SLO Library website to find out information about how to place holds, where to pick up, how you can exchange information with our librarians, as far as text messaging and phone calls to pick up your materials. Hours of operation will be Tuesday through Friday, from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. While you're on our website, we encourage you to continue to use our digital content, ranging anywhere from streaming movies, magazines, e-resources, and audiobooks. Again, you can find out more information about our curbside delivery at www.slolibrary.org. At this time, we have no plans of opening our branches until further notification from the California Department of Public Health. At this time, I'll turn the mic over to Dr. Borenstein, thank you.

- Thank you, Chris, good afternoon. So as usual I will give you first our case count. Consistent with recent days we continue to have very small numbers of increase. We went up by one since yesterday. So we are at 269 cases. 91% of them have recovered, so 244. We do have four individuals in the hospital, and all of them are in intensive care at the time being. So we are wishing them and their families well for recovery, but our numbers in general continue to be low, and we have very small increases over the past week or so. There has been a little bit of confusion in what stage we're in. As you know, we have let our order lapse, and we are living under the state public health director's order, such that those counties, ourselves included, that were able to move forward with all sectors of stage two have done so. There has been some talk of are we or are we not in stage three, and we are not at this time. And one sector in particular had gotten from their professional

association the green light, but that did not come from the California Department of Public Health, nor from our County Office of Public Health, so massage therapy, unfortunately, is in stage three, and stage three businesses are not open at this time. So for those who got other information, we're sorry, and asking you that you continue to be patient and await the full guidance that will be coming out for moving forward into stage three, not just the massage therapy businesses, but a host of other entities that are waiting to move forward. In the meantime, we continue to ask that those businesses prepare themselves and be fully ready with a plan, with a risk assessment, with the self-certification. All of those things are available on our website at readyslo.org, and we know that businesses are anxious, so please use this time to prepare your businesses to be ready to move forward just as soon as possible and as soon as the state provides guidance for each of these sectors moving forward. We wanna talk again about testing. Testing is one the most important aspects of this is not only to have testing available for symptomatic people, but to continue to do widespread testing, to do contact testing when people become sick or may have been exposed, and so we want our community to continue to utilize all the resources that are available. So at this time, as you know, we have had our two state provided clinics, one in Paso Robles, at the Veterans Hall, and one in Grover Beach at Ramona Gardens Community Center. Those are Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Paso Robles site will have just one more week of testing, so through June 5th of next week. We do testing at those locations Monday to Friday. So Paso Robles will discontinue after June 5th, next Friday, and we will have a new site for testing in San Luis Obispo City at the Veterans Hall also to be held Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Grover Beach site will continue. In addition to those sites, as I've been talking about us moving forward into other community settings, beginning next Monday, June 1st, through a county contract with a company called US Health Fairs, we are beginning to do our pop-up clinics in different communities, and those will be on June 1st and June 2nd from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Cambria and specifically at the Veterans Memorial site in Cambria. The following two days, the Wednesday and Thursday of that week, June 3rd, June 4th, we will be at the Los Osos Red Barn. People can register on readyslo.org for any of these clinic sites. You can make an appointment for the Optum sites. You can register for the US Health Fair sites by going onto that website and looking for testing locations, and then you can click on the specific testing location and move forward through the process that is available online. For those who want to make the appointment for the Optum sites, and do not have

access to the internet, there is a phone number that they are staffing to make that appointment, and that phone number is, I just had it, 888-634-1123. That's to make appointments for the Grover Beach site, the Paso site, and then beginning on June 8th for the San Luis Obispo City site. If you don't have internet access and want to make appointments and want to register for the Cambria, the Los Osos sites or other sites that we will be moving to, you can, if there is no internet access available to you, you can call our phone assistance center. Again, the testing is free. They will ask for health insurance information, but it is not only for those with symptoms, but anyone who may think that they've been exposed. I do want to remind people though that getting tested on any particular day is a point in time. It is looking for virus in your system on that day, and so should a test be negative, it means that you are not infected on the day of testing. But that doesn't mean that you might not receive infection at some point in the future, even possibly the next day. So always be tuned in to this testing availability and a once and done is not the right approach if you have symptoms or if you believe that you've been exposed to someone with a disease. I wanna talk a little bit. I'm gonna reach out parents who I know have been really struggling with what is going on in their households and having kids at home and either themselves schooling students or ensuring that their older students are doing their schoolwork from home, and we know that this has been really hard on those families and those parents. So we wanna remind you why we are in this situation. If anyone hasn't heard, we, in the United States, have passed 100,000 deaths of U.S. residents in the United States really in a very short period of time. We continue to not have good treatment. We continue to not have a vaccine, and so as we begin the opening of businesses, we are of course particularly sensitive to safeguarding our children. So with that in mind, I ask of parents that they help educate children as we begin to send them out into the world, back to summer camps or summer school or child care situations, even the most young children can remember their ABCs. And so what those are are remind your children to A, Avoid sharing food and drink with others, B, Be a safe distance of six feet away from other people, and C, Clean your hands at all times, when you're not at home especially. So families can begin to look forward to the opening of more child care settings. We know it is limited. We know that families have hard time in a good year finding child care. We understand that it is that much harder now, but hopefully our families can begin to reach out to their child care resources and try to find a source for child care. Many of our camps, our day camps in the county, are looking at moving forward. So parents should begin to look for those opportunities, and if

their children can take advantage of a summer school program, that would also be a way that they can start to let their children back to some level of activity outside the home. In particular with respect to child care facilities, the Child Care Resource Planning Council is available through CAPSLO, so, C-A-P-S-L-O, on their website is a place to look to for child care resources. And lastly, excuse me, lastly today I wanna talk about where we are with our short term lodging order. As you know, we put it into place almost two weeks ago. I am pleased to report that in that period of time, which is coming close to an incubation period, we have not seen an uptick of cases. We've seen one additional case from coastal communities, and we did communicate to our lodging partners that we would review this on an every two week basis. That comes due on Sunday. We've already had dialogue in the emergency operations center with key staff about how we would proceed forward, and what we would, what we are planning to do is to wait for nearly an incubation period from our highest, our peak of occupancy in our county and the coastal communities, which we believe was Memorial Day weekend. So that being only a week ago, we plan to make a decision next Friday about where we move with respect to this order. That could be that we change the metrics. If we continue to see very good outcomes, as we have over the past two, three weeks, or more in large numbers of people populating our communities, especially our coastal communities, if we continue to see that we have no disease spread, then we're willing to move forward in either loosening and increasing the percentage occupancy, or possibly even rescinding the order, if all continues to go well. In the meantime, we are continuing to really ask of our lodging community not only their patience, but their cooperation. We put into place an order and we expect to live by that order. So we have asked all of our partners in the lodging industry to share with us their metrics. We are doing spot checks, but we have not heard back from more than half of the hotels that were supposed to report to us as to what their occupancy rates were over this last weekend. So we are gonna be following up with all of those businesses. We ask that they get that information in as soon as possible and not wait for our call, but we will be calling with them. We will be doing spot checks in the businesses, and we are prepared to issue fines if need be. We really want this to be a partnership. We want this to be compliance, as we have said with everything throughout this, but we can't really evaluate what the situation is on the ground if we're not getting compliance. So that is our plan moving forward is to ask our business partners in the lodging industry to share the information that we have required of them to make their rosters available on spot checks, and to continue to

complex, and we in return vow that we will work with them and based on what we are seeing in real time on the ground after we have passed an incubation period from our peak visitation on Memorial Day we will move forward accordingly. So with that, I want to thank everyone who's continuing to work hard and sustain the pains of this pandemic, either through the loss of their loved ones, as I mentioned, 100,000 people is no small number, and even if they haven't been touched personally by the actual disease we've all been touched in many ways, whether it's staying home with your children or your business revenues decreasing, or just the anxiety that comes with the unknown. I continue to indulge our entire community to work together on this. We will see an end, but it isn't around the corner. But we're doing well, and we want to continue to do well, so keep up the good work. And with that, I'll open it up for questions.

- [Man] Dr. Borenstein, taking it back to testing, there's no doubt that Paso Robles is the hotspot here in the county, Atascadero, they're number one with 113 cases. That's 42% of all cases in the county. So the testing clinic, the state run, will be closing up there in Paso. Why is that?

- So we would prefer to keep things in Paso. You're right that it is the place that we have seen the largest number of cases, but to be perfectly honest our numbers being tested at that location are considerably lower than our other locations, and the state is getting lots of requests to bring those resources to other locations. So we said if we get our numbers up in another location, will you stay here, and the answer was yes, so that's why we are making that move. We also have not been in SLO City. We know there's a lot of interest there, and similar to what we're doing with our other vendor is trying to move around the county. We're gonna do that in this case as well, and we really wanna retain the state resource that's available to us for testing.

- [Man] The pop-up clinic, will there be a possibility that goes into those north county communities that are seeing those heavy cases?

- Yes, in fact, I didn't go into the following week, but we plan to be in Atascadero the second week of June.

- [Man] Is there anything you can do, or what kind of plans you may have to really bump up those testing numbers, in Paso Robles particularly once you go back in with the pop-up clinics, or something else .

- So to an extent, it's not a totally bad sign that we're not having a lot of people rushing to test, because it means we're not seeing a ton of illness. That is borne out by the fact that only 1% of all of our tests are proving to be positive. So as you know, we've opened it to people who are asymptomatic or may have traveled and had contact there, or contact with someone that they've heard of in their neighborhood who may have been tested positive. So we've opened the floodgates to testing. We can't force people to test, and especially if they have no symptoms and no reason to believe that they have contracted this illness. We may see our testing numbers stagnate. We want to continue though to have the resource available and the testing capacity in an ongoing fashion. So we're working hard to retain that state contracted resource in both our north county and our south county, or in this case, we're moving it to mid-county for the time being.

- [Man] And one more thing about testing, you know, when you expanded to Grover Beach and Paso Robles that added, what is it, 500--

- 264 a day--

- Right, right.

- Capacity, yeah.

- [Man] It was expected we'd see a rise in positive cases, but it really has kind of been the opposite. How surprised are you about that, that the numbers have remained flat, even though there's been additional testing?

- Yeah, I'm very pleasantly surprised. That's what we wanna see. We wanna see high numbers of people tested, and low numbers of positives. And so the fact that we have driven down that positivity case is an important metric for us understanding that the reason we're not seeing cases is because of lack of testing, the reason we're not seeing cases is because the virus is just not as prevalent here right now.

- [Woman] Dr. Borenstein can you explain how you selected the places like Cambria and Los Osos for that testing, those testing plans?

- Yeah, particular communities that haven't, that have had a hard time, you know, that either don't have an urgent care clinic, or don't have much in the way of primary care resources even and they have requested of us that we provide testing. That's why we've started in those communities.

- [Woman] I have a question for Wade as well. Regarding the rental, kind of rental deferment that the supervisors put in place, that's going to run out in a couple of days. Do you have any information on that, if that's gonna be continued, what's gonna happen with that?

- It's not gonna be continued, because we feel that it would be redundant with what the state has in place right now.

- [Woman] Okay, got you, do you have any information on the state's order? I can check into that.

- I don't.

- Okay, okay.

- [Man] Wade, we heard the governor speak today about stage three businesses maybe being able to progress in their counties, I should say. What can you tell us about where the county stands now in that aspect?

- The question was about stage three and where's the county situated in that aspect. Well, I think as Dr. Borenstein said, the community's doing everything right, so we can keep moving forward, and we wanna keep it that way. We wanna keep up with what we can all do as community members to keep each other safe, so we can keep moving forward when we're allowed to. The governor said that he's considering more local, local control. What he means by that is when the state puts out guidance then it's up to the locals to determine if they're gonna move forward with that guidance. I think we would like in some instances to move forward as we did previously when we talked about our start plan. But we're eagerly looking forward to those new guidances being published, so we can move our community forward with those. But we're not allowed to move forward underneath the governor's order until we receive permission to do so per our attestation.

- [Woman] Any other questions?

- Thank you all again for coming today and for tuning in online and on TV. We have one change and a few quick reminders. The phone assistance center will be open until 5:00 p.m. today and then will reopen again on Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. It will be available Monday through Friday next week from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and that number is 805-543-2444. There is also the recorded message that's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at the public health information line at 805-788-2903. Remember that all our county's information related to COVID-19 is available

on readyslo.org, in both English and Spanish. This includes the information on all four of the testing sites that Dr. Borenstein discussed in her statement today. Thank you again for tuning in. Our briefings are available on SLO County Public Health's Facebook page, on our county homepage, and also on the livestreams of KCOY and KSBY. Our briefings are also rebroadcast on public access channel 21 at midnight, 8:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m. until our next briefing occurs. Our next briefing will be on Monday at 3:15. Thank you for staying engaged. Be safe and have a great weekend.