



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: County Health Department
Department No.: 041
Agenda Date: June 16, 2026
Placement: Departmental Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: No Vote Required

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director: Mouhanad Hammami, Director, County Health

Signed by:
Mouhanad Hammami
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Contact: Lindsay Walter, Deputy Director of Clinical Care

SUBJECT: Public Hearing for Impacts to Medical Services provided by the County of Santa Barbara

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Conduct a public hearing to discuss the closure, elimination, or reduction of medical services provided by the County of Santa Barbara;
- b) Designate County Health to provide a 24-hour information service that can give eligible people immediate information on the available services and access to them, and to receive and respond to complaints from individuals eligible for services under Health and Safety Code Chapter 2.5 (sections 1440-1498); and
- c) Determine that the above-recommended actions are not a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)[5], finding that the actions consist of administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is before the Board to provide the public with information and an opportunity to comment on proposed changes to medical services offered by the County Health Department (CHD). As part of

this public hearing, CHD is outlining proposed changes to medical services, as detailed in this Board letter, which are scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2026. These proposed changes include:

- Transitioning In-House Phlebotomy (blood draw) services at the Lompoc and Santa Maria Health Centers to community laboratory partners
- Closing the County Health pharmacies in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria and shifting services to community pharmacies and the Lompoc Health Care Center Pharmacy
- Discontinuing Nephrology, Urology, Neurology, and Gastroenterology specialty services at the Santa Barbara Health Center

These proposed changes are intended to help address CHD's ongoing budget challenges while ensuring patients continue to receive care through expanded community partnerships, more consistent service hours, and more accessible locations. Patients who use these services will be supported with referrals, assistance transferring care, and continued access to sliding-fee discounts where applicable.

This public hearing is required under the Beilenson Act before the Board can consider and adopt the County of Santa Barbara Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27, which includes these proposed changes.

To support the community during this transition, CHD has established a 24-hour information line at (805) 681-5100. The Board is being asked to designate County Health to provide a 24-hour information service to give eligible people immediate information on the available services and access to them, and to receive and respond to complaints from individuals eligible for services. This line will satisfy this requirement.

Discussion:

The Beilenson Act requires a public hearing for the closing, elimination, or reduction of medical services. This hearing presents an opportunity for the public to provide input to the Board prior to the adoption of the recommended budget and service reductions.

The proposed reductions or changes to medical services are:

In-House Phlebotomy (Blood Draw) Services

To improve efficiency and enhance services for our patients, the County Health Department (CHD) is proposing to transition all blood draw services to its contracted community laboratory partners. Beginning July 1, 2026, onsite phlebotomy services at the Santa Maria Health Center and Lompoc Health Center would be discontinued. Eligible patients will continue to receive the same sliding-fee discounts.

Most CHD laboratory testing is already performed offsite by contracted laboratories, and the Santa Barbara Health Center has not provided onsite blood draws since the summer of 2025 due to staffing limitations.

Currently, CHD provides limited phlebotomy hours:

- Santa Maria Health Center: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. (last draw at 12:00 p.m.)
- Lompoc Health Center: Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., but hours often fluctuate depending on staffing availability

Transitioning to community laboratory partners will give patients access to more consistent schedules, expanded morning and afternoon availability, and multiple nearby locations.

Who Is Affected

Patients who currently receive onsite blood draws at:

- Santa Maria Health Center
- Lompoc Health Center

In the past 12 months:

- 3,652 Lompoc patients received in-house blood draw services
- 2,920 Santa Maria patients received in-house blood draw services

These patients will now complete their blood tests at contracted laboratory sites after July 1, 2026. Patients are being notified of this change and will receive information about nearby lab locations. Phlebotomy services at the Santa Barbara Health Center have been unavailable since the summer of 2025 due to staffing shortages, and this proposal does not change current services for Santa Barbara patients.

Expanded Options Through Contracted Laboratory Partners

CHD partners with Quest Diagnostics and Pacific Diagnostic Laboratories, which operate multiple patient service centers throughout Santa Barbara County. These labs offer:

- Earlier morning availability
- Later afternoon and early evening hours
- Consistent, reliable schedules
- Multiple convenient service locations

Nearby contracted lab locations include:

- Santa Maria: Quest Diagnostics, approximately 1 mile from the Santa Maria Health Center
- Lompoc: Pacific Diagnostic Laboratories, approximately 2 miles from the Lompoc Health Center

The contracted laboratories will bill CHD for charges associated with self-pay patients, and CHD will offer the same sliding fee discount or global free structure currently in place at CHD.

Budget Impact

The proposal includes a reduction of \$533,000 in in-house phlebotomy services and the elimination of 4.5 full-time equivalent positions (3.5 filled, 1 vacant).

Pharmacy Services

To improve efficiency and enhance services for our patients, the County Health Department (CHD) is proposing to consolidate its pharmacy operations. Beginning July 1, 2026, pharmacy services at the Santa Barbara Health Center and Santa Maria Health Center would transition to a single, centralized location at the Lompoc Health Care Center Pharmacy.

Currently, County pharmacies operate Monday–Friday from 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. Consolidation would allow patients to access prescriptions through community pharmacy partners offering extended evening and weekend hours, while still maintaining the same medication pricing provided by County pharmacies.

Who Is Affected

- Santa Maria pharmacy: 1,942 unique patients annually
- Santa Barbara pharmacy: 1,805 unique patients annually
- Patients were notified in May 2026
- As of early June:
 - 1,581 patients have selected a community pharmacy
 - 125 have chosen the Lompoc Health Care Center Pharmacy
- Approximately 2,041 patients still need to select a new pharmacy

Expanded Options Through Walgreens

CHD has partnered with Walgreens to ensure patients have convenient access to their prescriptions with extended hours, including evenings, weekends, and—at the Santa Maria Broadway location—24-hour service. Patients who choose Walgreens will continue to receive the same medication pricing currently offered at County pharmacies.

Nearby contracted Walgreens locations include:

- Santa Maria: 0.6 miles from the Santa Maria Health Care Center
- Lompoc: 1.5 miles from the Lompoc Health Care Center
- Goleta: 3.4 miles from the Santa Barbara Health Care Center

Services for Uninsured and Patient Assistance Program (PAP) Participants

There will be no interruption in services for uninsured patients, those with limited financial resources, or those enrolled in CHD's Patient Assistance Program (PAP). Their medications will continue to be filled at the Lompoc Health Care Center Pharmacy and delivered to the Santa Barbara and Santa Maria Health Centers for convenient pickup.

No Changes for Franklin and Carpinteria Patients

Pharmacy services for patients at the Franklin and Carpinteria Health Centers will remain the same. Medications will still be filled centrally for delivery and pickup; they will now simply be dispensed from the Lompoc pharmacy instead of the Santa Barbara pharmacy.

Budget Impact

This proposal includes a reduction of \$8,464,000 in pharmacy services and the elimination of 9.0 full-time equivalent positions (7 filled, 2 vacant).

Specialty Services

County Health Department (CHD) has proposed eliminating Nephrology, Urology, Neurology, and Gastroenterology services at the Santa Barbara Health Center effective July 1, 2026. These specialty services are not offered at other CHD clinics.

CHD clinic leadership began working with County providers and care teams in early 2026 to review patients who may be affected by this change. Particular attention was given to patients with complex medical needs who may require additional support transitioning to new specialty providers.

CHD has identified external specialists for referral and confirmed with CenCal Health that these providers are included in CenCal's network.

Who Is Affected

According to a 12-month report from March 2026, the following patients are currently receiving specialty care at the Santa Barbara Health Center:

- Nephrology: 93 patients
- Urology: 236 patients
- Neurology: 298 patients
- Gastroenterology: 165 patients

Patients affected by these changes have been notified and provided with information about identified referral specialists. Health teams have been working directly with patients and receiving providers to ensure a seamless transition of care and to share all necessary medical information. For patients who encounter challenges during this process, the County Health Care team will continue to provide support until care is fully transferred.

Primary Care Services Remain Unchanged

These changes apply only to specialty services at the Santa Barbara Health Center.

- Patients whose primary care provider is within CHD will continue receiving all primary care services through County Health.
- Patients whose primary care provider is outside CHD will continue with their existing provider, who can also help coordinate future specialty referrals as needed.

Budget Impact

The proposed reduction in specialty services totals \$231,000, including: eliminating approximately \$32,000 for nephrology services, \$42,000 for urology services, \$123,000 for neurology services, and \$34,000 for gastroenterology services.

Background:

On April 13, 2026, the County Executive Office presented the County of Santa Barbara's preliminary Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 budget to the Board and public. The recommended budget includes the closure, elimination, or reduction of medical services provided by the County of Santa Barbara Health Department (CHD). The proposed reductions are set forth in the Notice of Public Hearing in Attachment 1. California Health and Safety Code, section 1442.5 (commonly referred to as the "Beilenson Act" after the sponsor of the legislation) requires a public hearing prior to the, "(1) closing, (2) eliminating or reducing the level of medical services provided by, or (3) the leasing, selling or transfer of management of, a county facility...". In this instance, a Beilenson hearing is necessary before the Board can adopt the proposed budget which includes the closure, elimination, or reduction of medical services provided by the County.

Due to budgetary constraints and an ongoing deficit, CHD completed a comprehensive review of its services to assess operational needs, financial impacts, and potential alternatives. As a result, CHD proposed closing the Lompoc and Santa Maria pharmacies, eliminating select specialty services at the Santa Barbara Health Center, and discontinuing in-house phlebotomy services at the Lompoc and Santa Maria Health Centers.

The Beilenson Act requires that notice of this hearing is posted at the entrance of all County healthcare facilities, even those that will not be impacted by the change. The notice must include:

1. A list of the proposed reductions or changes, by facility and service
2. The amount and type of each proposed change

3. The expected savings
4. The number of persons affected

In accordance with the Beilenson Act, on June 2, 2026, CHD posted a Notice of Public Hearing (Attachment 1) at County health care facilities. Following this hearing, your Board will separately consider the Recommended County FY 2026-27 budget, which includes the closures, eliminations, or reductions in service addressed in the Notice of Public Hearing (Attachment 1). Additionally, the Board is being asked to designate County Health to provide a 24-hour information service that can give eligible people immediate information on the available services and access to them, and to receive and respond to complaints from individuals eligible for services under Health and Safety Code Chapter 2.5. CHD has a dedicated 24-hour information line at (805) 681-5100 to comply with this requirement. Beilenson information will be available through CHD's webpage: <https://www.countyofsb.org/2150/Health-Care-Centers>.

For any questions about this hearing or the recommended changes to medical services provided by the CHD, including immediate information on available services and complaints from people eligible for services under this chapter, a 24-hour special information line is available at (805) 681-5100.

Fiscal, Facilities and Staff Impacts:

Reductions included in this Board Letter for the closure, elimination, or reduction of medical services provided by the County result in a savings of \$9,228,000 in the FY 2026-27 Recommended budget. Following the Beilenson Hearing, your Board will separately consider the overall County budget on June 16, 2026.

The proposed in-house phlebotomy reductions of \$533,000 include eliminating 4.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Lab Assistant positions—3.5 FTE currently filled and 1.0 FTE vacant.

The proposed reduction in pharmacy services of \$8,464,000 includes the elimination of 9.0 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) - 7.0 FTE currently filled and 2.0 FTE vacant.

The proposed reduction in specialty services of \$231,000 includes eliminating approximately \$32,000 for nephrology services, \$42,000 for urology services, \$123,000 for neurology services, and \$34,000 for gastroenterology services.

County Human Resources, in close collaboration with key community partners, has implemented a comprehensive support approach for employees impacted by recent changes. This support includes direct access to a variety of resources, including two job fairs held for displaced and laid off employees on May 27, 2026, in North County and June 2, 2026, in South County. Additionally, laid off employees have been offered individual career counseling sessions and an opportunity to attend a transition workshop for information on topics such as employee benefits, SBCERS retirement, unemployment benefits, mental health support and other relevant information for employees who are separating from County employment. To ensure all affected employees can fully benefit from these opportunities, work schedules have been proactively adjusted, and accommodations have been made to facilitate their attendance.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Reductions in Medical Services

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Contact Information:

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