



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO  
HEALTH AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT



December 7, 2020

Dear Dr. Pan,

We would like to begin by thanking you for your leadership and dedication during this unprecedented global pandemic.

As Health Officers and Public Health Directors, we are writing today to ask for your consideration in allowing San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura County to exit the Regional Stay At Home Order (RSAHO) after three weeks, if the ICU capacity in our three counties exceeds 15% and is expected to stay on that course based on the four-week ICU bed capacity projection to be done biweekly by your Department.

We anticipate that as a Central Coast Coalition (CCC), we will be able to exit the RSAHO much sooner than as members of the Southern CA region. Our ICU capacity currently exceeds 15%, as you can see from the chart below. We are concerned that the high prevalence of disease in the large southern California counties will prevent our three counties from exiting the RSAHO.

We understand the concerns at the State level due to the unprecedented rise in case counts and impacts in many geographic areas on the general acute care hospital system in California and elsewhere. Therefore, we agree with the addition of a hospital-based metric to the considerations for non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI). As you know, Dr. Borenstein has asked for just such action over many weeks as we all moved into the Blueprint for a Safer Economy as the schema for NPI determinations. Yet we believe that the utilization of such a large and diverse regional assignment is not reflective of the risks for our Central Coast area.

Our contiguous region of CCC counties has a long and deep history of collaboration and partnership to prevent disease, protect health in our region, and promote health equity. Below is just a highlight of some of our joint efforts over the past one to two decades:

- Regional laboratory response network (LRN)
- Covered California enrollment
- Every Woman Counts Cancer Detection Program
- Gold Coast Collaborative for Obesity Prevention
- Joint grant to address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
- Farmworkers Health initiatives
- Tri-County Regional Tobacco Team

Unlike the rest of the Southern California regional boundaries being utilized for COVID-19 mitigation, we strongly anticipate that the three weeks in RSAHO will allow us to rapidly reset our case rates and testing

positivity, and further improve our ICU capacity. Our COVID-19 metrics (case rates and test positivity) and mitigation efforts (community outreach and education, testing and other efforts) among our three counties are similar, and our metrics are lower than the majority of the counties in the current region. We expect that continued and expanded collective efforts will improve our metrics sooner than if we are to remain in the larger region. Also, our Central Coast region has access to an alternate care site which has remained in warm status since April 2020, on the campus of Cal Poly, with an immediate 165-bed census (sufficient beds, oxygen concentrators, IV support, and PPE are in place) and the option to rapidly scale up to 900 beds with staff support. We will of course continue to partner with and assist other counties in the current Southern California region, but strongly feel that for our tri-county region, having our own region is in the best interest for our residents.

Therefore, we request that our long-standing CCC tri-county region, which is geographically, demographically, and functionally distinct from the rest of the Southern California region be allowed to exit the RSAHO as a separate region. Being kept in the RSAHO any longer is unnecessary and will cause preventable educational and economic hardships to our communities.

In closing, we respectfully request that our three counties be allowed to exit the current RSAHO when we meet the criteria because we have the capacity and the partnership to mitigate COVID-19 in our Central Coast Region, as well as to maintain our ICU capacity at the requested level.

In partnership,

San Luis Obispo County: Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH, Health Officer/Public Health Director



Santa Barbara County: Van Do-Reynoso, MPH, PhD, Public Health Director



Santa Barbara County: Ansong Henning, MD, Health Officer

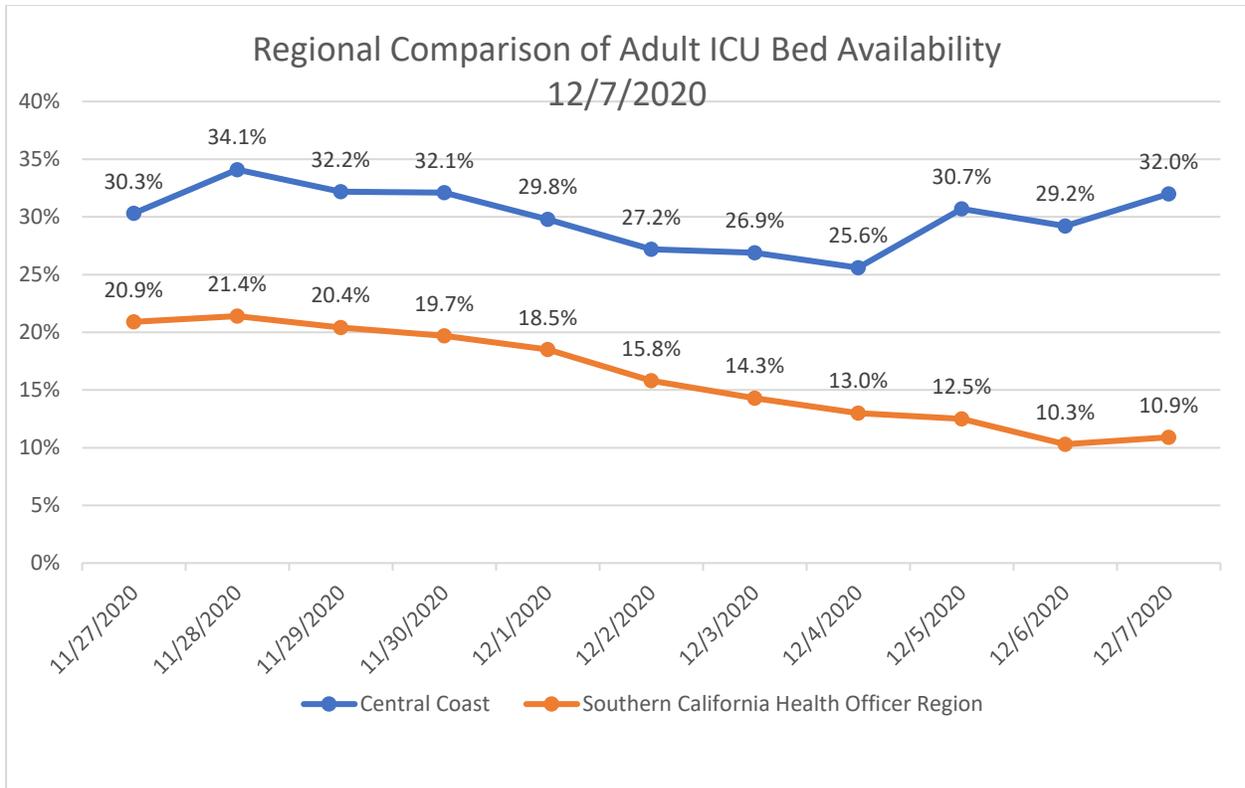


Ventura County: Robert Levin, MD, Health Officer



Ventura County: Rigoberto Vargas, MPH, Public Health Director





CC:

- San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
- San Luis Obispo County, County Administrative Officer
- Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
- Santa Barbara County Chief Executive Officer
- Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Ventura County Chief Executive Officer
- Central Coast Region Elected State Representatives
- Mark Ghaly, MD, MPH, Secretary, CA Health & Human Services Agency