

Public Comment - Health & Human Services - SBCTAC

From: mikestoker@aol.com
To: sbcob
Subject: 6/16 & 6/18 Budget Hearing...The SBCTAC urges the Board NOT to close county specialty health care clinics.
Date: Thursday, June 4, 2026 1:20:48 PM

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.



Santa Barbara County Taxpayer Advocacy Center
2151 S. College Dr., Suite 101
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 708-9100
www.sbctac.org
MikeStoker@aol.com

"The SBCTAC...Fighting for the Taxpayer and Helping our Businesses Succeed..."

Dear Chairman Nelson and Honorable Board Members,

Please see my message to our membership and interested parties requesting that they oppose the proposal to eliminate county specialty health care clinics.

On behalf of our over 350 members, the SBCTAC urges you to oppose this recommendation. The SBCTAC strongly believes the county is going to incur substantial unanticipated expenses from the billing you will receive from hospitals in SB County that end up providing services to patients who should have been provided care from the County of SB.

Also, the SBCTAC strongly believes the county is violating the Beilenson Act by taking this action without having a publicly noticed meeting that specifically and clearly informed the public of the specific proposal to eliminate county health care services that the public relies upon.

The SBCTAC urges the Board to reject this proposal.

Best regards,
Mike Stoker
President & CEO, SBCTAC



Santa Barbara County Taxpayer Advocacy Center
2151 S. College Dr., Suite 101
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 708-9100
www.sbctac.org
MikeStoker@aol.com

"The SBCTAC...Fighting for the Taxpayer and Helping our Businesses Succeed..."

Dear friends,

In the upcoming Budget Hearing on June 16th, the Board of Supervisors will consider closing county specialty health care clinics and will lay off over 100 staff positions in these clinics. At the Budget Workshop in April, the Director of

the County Health Department represented that clinics that serve essential services and have sufficient clients would not be closed pursuant to his proposal. It was also suggested by the Director that there could be 5 clinics that serve a very small population that could be closed under his proposal.

Significantly, **no action or direction was given by the Board of Supervisors** at the Budget Workshop. Accordingly, the Santa Barbara County Taxpayer Advocacy Center (SBCTAC) was shocked when we learned that without BOS direction, the Director has already started to close 'specialty care' clinics and has laid off 5 nurses in these clinics. From what we understand, the Director hopes to get formal Board approval of the plan to close specialty clinics on June 16th at the budget hearing, notwithstanding that he has already started to close those clinics without Board approval.

The SBCTAC believes the closure of specialty care clinics is a bad idea. If the county reduces its lower-cost outpatient services (limiting patients' access to physicians on a non-engagement basis), those patients will flood emergency rooms at our local hospitals. This will reduce access to emergency care for ALL county residents, as the emergency rooms will simply be too busy to see everyone at the same time, waits will be longer, and access will be negatively impacted for everyone. **It will also lead to significantly higher costs for the county, which in many cases will be billed by our hospitals at a much higher rate than the cost of providing the service in the clinic, and the County will be legally obligated to pay the bills.**

The SBCTAC would also like to advise the Board that these actions very well could be a violation of the **Beilenson Act**, which requires notice and a public hearing and public comment before curtailing any county health care services. The Budget Workshop does not satisfy the requirements of the Beilenson Act, as the public was NOT notified of a specific plan to take specific action to put the public on notice of what actions the county or the Director was contemplating taking.

It is for that reason that I am asking you to join me in urging the supervisors NOT to support this proposal to significantly eliminate

specialty health care clinics in Santa Barbara County.

I urge you to show up on June 16th at the budget hearing at the County Building in the Supervisor Hearing Room, located on the 4th floor, to speak out against this proposal. I will provide you with more details next week as to what time we expect the matter to be heard. If you cannot attend in person, consider testifying via Zoom. If you need directions on how to testify via Zoom, please email or call me.

And please email the Supervisors today to advise them that you oppose this proposal. Their email addresses are:
roylee@countyofsb.org, steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org,
bob.nelson@countyofsb.org, joan.hartman@countyofsb.org,
laura.capps@countyofsb.org. If it would make it easier for you, you can forward this email to the supervisors with a simple personal message that you OPPOSE closing county specialty health care clinics.

As always, feel free to call if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Best regards,
Mike Stoker
President & CEO, SBCTAC
