

- Good afternoon. Today is Friday, May 15th, 2020. My name is Michelle Shoresman. Thank you for watching today's San Luis Obispo County COVID-19 media briefing. This afternoon we have three speakers for you. We will begin today with the SLO Food Bank's CEO, Garret Olson. He will be followed by County Administrative Officer and Emergency Services Director Wade Horton. And we will close today with County Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein. Thank you again to our American Sign Language interpreter, Robin Babb. And now SLO Food Bank's CEO, Garret Olson.

- Good afternoon. The collaboration between the County of San Luis Obispo and the SLO Food Bank is a story that I'd like to share. In response to the county and state shelter-in-home orders, the SLO Food Bank and the County of San Luis Obispo partnered to implement a program to deliver food to self-isolating seniors and the medically vulnerable. For those people who are in conditions where they did not have family, friends, neighbors, caregivers, or other community organizations available to bring them food and medicine, this has been a spectacular success. To date, since commencing in mid-March, through our partnership we've made over 7,300 home deliveries and approximately 1,000 of those each week. There are over 450 of them going on right now. Each delivery consists of two bags of food, one containing fresh produce and the other containing shelf-stable food rich in protein and nutrients, including canned tuna and chicken and vegetables and rice and beans and pasta. It is a healthy, nutritious option for people that don't have other options. We also began delivering cat food and dog food to those who need it thanks to a generous donation from the Lemos Feed & Pet Supply company. We're also able to deliver prescription food, excuse me, prescription medications to those who are not able to get to their pharmacies for new prescription and refills. To make these deliveries, the County has provided employees that are currently serving as disaster service workers to assist the SLO Food Bank with increased operations in response to COVID-19. They have been invaluable to our team. This partnership is truly the gold standard relationship between local government and the non-profit, focused on meeting the needs of our community in the most effective and efficient manner. In terms of statistics, the pandemic has drastically impacted our operations. Over the past eight weeks, food provided to our 77 agency partners throughout the entire county has more than tripled from approximately 70,000 pounds per month prior to COVID to greater than 216,000 pounds of food per month now. Through our direct services providing food to clients in need through our food bank distributions throughout the county, the number of households we are serving has also realized a greater than tripling effect. Prior to COVID, we were

serving approximately 3,000 households and now we are serving over 9,200 households monthly. We are rapidly moving towards providing over one 1/2 million pounds of food to people in need throughout our community. We have been also touched by the incredible support of our community, particularly those who have donated to sustain our operations. Thank you so much. And although many have given and we truly appreciate your generosity, the Food Bank's fundraising opportunities have been significantly impacted by the realities of this pandemic. Over 70% of our operating budget comes through local donations and less than 18% of that comes from federal grants. Simply put, our food bank serves our community powered by the strength and generosity of our community. One of our major fundraising efforts, Hunger Awareness Day, is scheduled for June 5th this year. Now, this is normally a very social activity, having celebrities and volunteers out on sidewalks sharing the story of investing in the Food Bank and requesting donations from passersby in communities all across the county. This year, we are adjusting to take Hunger Awareness Day virtual and so we ask that you keep your eyes open for an opportunity to give through Hunger Awareness Day. In closing, our message for the community is as simple as it is genuine. If you need help, the SLO Food Bank is here to help you. To find a location for food nearest you, go to our website, SLOFoodBank.org/foodfinder. If you need service from the COVID-19 food delivery program, you can submit your request online at ReadySLO.org or by calling the County Phone Assistance Center at 805-453-2444. If you can contact someone else to assist you, we ask that you do so, so that our precious resources can go to those who do not have other resources available to them. And finally, if you are in a position to help others at whatever level is comfortable to you, please visit us at SLOFoodBank.org/donate and consider becoming a monthly donor. We turn each dollar donated into \$4 worth of purchasing power in this community. For about the same cost as a monthly subscription to Netflix, together we can provide 45 nutritious meals to those who are in need in our community. We guarantee that that monthly subscription with the SLO Food Bank will fill your hearts with love just as much as it fills hungry bellies with food and will give you a genuine feeling of satisfaction far greater than binge-watching all 11 seasons of "Cheers." Again, our sincere thanks to the County Board of Supervisors, to our County Administrative Officer Wade Horton, to the entire County Emergency Operations care and shelter team led by John Diodati, to our disaster service workers, including Leo Ontiveros and Jen Miller, for their incredible partnership. This is truly a story of caring and compassionate governance that deserves to be told. And with that, it is my honor to turn it over to our County Administrative Officer and Emergency Services Director Wade Horton.

- Thank you, Garret. Wade Horton, County CEO, emergency services director. I would like to appreciate the partnership we've had with the Food Bank and all the work that Garret's done to provide for our community, so thank you. Today I'd like to note that the county shelter-at-home order will lapse tomorrow. Our original intent was to renew our shelter-at-home order and align it with our local reopening plan, the START guide. However, instead of providing approval to move forward with our county plan, the governor chose to implement his statewide plan called the Resilience Roadmap. Therefore, our county shelter-at-home order is no longer needed. What's important to understand is that moving forward SLO County falls under the state's stay-at-home order and we must follow the state's timeline and process for reopening. I'd like you to know the county is taking all steps necessary to safely reopen under the governor's plan. That said, with the coming Memorial Day weekend approaching and the summer tourism season, our county still needs to take measures to make sure we keep moving forward with the governor's plan and not backwards. I'll turn it over to Dr. Borenstein to provide additional details.

- Good afternoon. So let me first start with telling you where we are case-count-wise. We've gone up by three cases since yesterday and that puts us at 240 total number of COVID-19 cases for the County of San Luis Obispo. We only have now two individuals in the hospital, though both are in intensive care. But that is a 50% decrease. And we continue to have stable levels and recovery at 80% now. So that continues to be good news for our community. So let me talk more about this new order that you just heard mentioned. What we are looking at is a lodging order. So as the state begins to open up and the weather warms, we know that many people are going to want to come to our county, as they have year upon year, and we unfortunately need to tell our regular visitors and new visitors that this is not the time to come to our county. So tourism is one of the areas that we are most concerned about with respect to spread. This is how the disease got here from places in Asia. This is how it got spread to New York. This how infectious germs move, is from community to community via travel. So while we very much enjoy our tourism and we are very supportive of that industry, we continue to say that this is not the time to come. So what we are doing with respect to that is to try to put controls to the extent that we can on inter-county and inter-jurisdictional movement about our state. And so with that, I want to show you our slide. This is the kind of information that we look at at a regular basis as we make decisions. And as you can see, San Luis Obispo County, along with a couple of other counties, enjoy a fairly low rate of disease. These numbers represent the number of individuals to date who have been infected per 100,000 population. So our 240

cases with 2.83 hundred thousands puts us at 85 individuals who have been infected per 100,000 individuals who are residents of our county. Monterey is doing slightly better than us, Ventura's in the same range as us, but you can see that we, from all the areas from which we typically get our travel, the residents who live in many of these surrounding and neighboring counties are in considerably worse shape in terms of the amount of disease that they are experiencing among their residents and in their counties. So to just point out a few: King's County right to our northeast has 234 cases, nearly triple our number, per capita; Tulare is even higher at 278; Santa Barbara to our south, though, that does include Lompoc, has considerably higher; and Los Angeles is one of the areas from which we do get quite a bit of tourism and that they are continuing to experience very high rates of disease in that jurisdiction. So it's really with that in mind that we decided that we need to do something, especially as we begin to open up, especially as we begin to anticipate with Memorial Day weekend coming, summer travel, some means of trying to protect our community in order to be able to move forward in the ways that we have been talking about. We want to be able to take the next steps and open our community and keep at bay, at least for now, the additional risks that might be presented to our community from people coming from higher endemic areas in our surrounding counties. So with that, with public health protection in mind, we are issuing this new executive order to cap lodging occupancy at 50%. It will go into effect on Sunday, May 17th. So with the evening of May 17th, we are asking our lodging facilities of all types, hotels, motels, VRBOs, RV parks, our own campgrounds, and I will mention that in a moment, are all being asked to reduce their capacity to 50%. We think that this will allow all of the essential workforce that needs to continue to come into our community, be it healthcare personnel, be it construction projects, be it a number of areas in which that type of travel is still necessary and indicated, but we are asking our visitors for the time being to stay away. We are also, as I mentioned with campgrounds, we know that this continues to be a hardship for our lodging facilities, the businesses that own those facilities, and we are doing the same thing in our own county with our own county-run campgrounds that we are limiting reservations to only county reservation, I mean, county residents. We're opening our campgrounds moving forward to only county residents. So that's Lopez Lake, Santa Margarita Lake, and Oceano Memorial Park, beginning on Monday will only be accepting residents with a valid ID from our county. I think I used the word reservation but let me clarify that, that we will not be accepting reservations at this time for any of our campgrounds. So this will be on a walk-up basis, or a drive-up basis, and, again, for county residents. I want to say that we're not shutting down our hotels and motels. We very much want to work with that industry. As you

heard from Chuck Davison on Wednesday, we have a very important and meaningful partnership with them and we are working in concert to keep an eye on how this progresses. As more people may have essential reasons to come here, we're allowing that growth to happen, but we really do wanna keep tamped down the amount of out of town visitors. I will leave it at that with regard to the order. I did wanna circle back a bit on our reopening plan. I know on Wednesday I mentioned to businesses to go on our website and look for the guidance that they have so that they can begin to prepare, as I know many have been, but some businesses are probably waiting for additional guidance and so we've talked about going and finding the guidance. There's a number of specific things that our businesses can be doing right now in preparation for opening. So first, what will be part of the reopening plan for every business is that they have a site-specific protection plan and a checklist for that business. Those documents are available on our ReadySLO.org website. Businesses should be going through them. In many cases, they are several pages long and give the business an understanding of what things they need to be looking for, checking for, having in place, both in terms of materials and policies and making those site certification plans available to their employees. Along with having that information available to employees, one of the things that businesses need to be looking at is how are they gonna train their employees on how to limit the spread of disease. This includes self-screening for symptoms and messaging about staying home when sick. We continue to ask of our businesses to use liberal leave policies when possible so that we discourage people who feel that they must come to work to get a paycheck even if they are sick. That is the worst outcome for our community. So performing the detailed risk assessment, training employees, creating handwashing and disinfection protocols will help the business owners, the employees, and the public who will take advantage of those retail businesses and dining opportunities, and then, lastly, as we've been talking about all along, is physical distancing. So build in, some visuals is the best way to do it as many of the markets and pharmacies that have been open all through this have, you know, there's lots of opportunity now to purchase floor markers, six-foot distancing strips on the floor, and looking at how within a business they can spread out their material, dining opportunities, how they're gonna arrange their tables. So all of these kinds of things are things that we look to our businesses to go online to get the guidance for their particular industry and begin to actually have these things in place so that they will be prepared to open up as soon as they are able under the state's order. And with that, I will turn it over for questions.

- [Reporter] Dr. Borenstein, so could you explain, you said 50% reduction for hotels, Airbnb, and campgrounds, so I'm assuming that's 50% for each hotel. Seems like that would be very straightforward for hotels 'cause you just say, you know, you only can reserve half their rooms, but for someone with an Airbnb, a lot of people only have one room or one guesthouse. How will that work?

- Yeah, so my understanding for those short-term rentals in homes or B&Bs or VRBOs is they're allowed a certain number of tenancies over the course of a month. So if you're allowed to have six in the course of a month, that's the number of guest turnovers, then it would be three for that period of time, just as an example.

- [Reporter] And then, also, how do you guys plan to enforce this and what are the penalties if hotels don't abide by that?

- So as with everything during this pandemic, we ask for partnership with the business owners. We feel that we have had many a very productive conversation. There are always going to be outliers. Toward that end, we do plan on doing code enforcement checks of businesses. We will ask for rosters. You know, as I said, I think, the other day, that we're not gonna slam someone if they're at 51% for one night in a week, but we really are looking for compliance. If we're not getting compliance or someone's just absolutely flouting the law then we do have the opportunity of fines and other implementation of penalties.

- [Reporter] How will you make sure people coming to campgrounds are from SLO County? I mean, checking IDs or?

- Yeah, so absolutely. Checking driver's licenses or other IDs to indicate that someone is a local resident for campground usage.

- [Reporter] Dr. Borenstein, an update on the attestations? That is, will it be days, not weeks? I know it's only been two days since Wednesday but what kind of update can you provide on that?

- I don't have anything specific on our attestation. I do know that there is a phone conversation that's gonna happen with counties tonight and leadership of CDPH and I'm hoping to get more information at that time.

- [Reporter] And those restrictions on the hotels, motels, campgrounds, what's the timeline on those? Is that indefinite or what's, how long will those be in place?

- Yeah, so our approach with this lodging order is that we've left it open. We intend to review it on an every two week basis and see where we're at with respect to the disease, with respect to compliance, with respect to what we're seeing on the ground, and, you know, we'll react accordingly. We may have to squeeze down a little bit, we may be able to loosen up, but we'll be reviewing it on a regular basis. We don't have an end date, per se, but at any point that it seems appropriate, well, we can modify or withdraw it.

- [Reporter] And I've heard the County's also engaged in some, I guess, advertising, messaging, to some of our neighboring counties as well. Is there anything you can elaborate on that?

- We have undertaken a marketing, or anti-marketing, effort to those areas from which we know many of our most common, the areas from which we get the largest number of tourists, and we're trying to continue to put out that same message, which is we really love having you but not at this moment in time and we'll keep you posted when the situation changes.

- [Michelle] Any more questions?

- Thank you.

- Thank you all again for coming today and tuning in online and on TV. Just a few reminders that all of the information related to the county's response to COVID-19 is available on our website at ReadySLO.org. Our Phone Assistance Center remains open this weekend and our recorded Public Health Information Line also remains available. And our briefings are available live on our San Luis Obispo County Facebook page as well as our County homepage. Those can also be viewed on the livestreams of KCLY and KSBY. And finally, if you miss any of the briefings, you can view them on Public Access 21, channel 21, at midnight, 8:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled briefing occurs. So that's it for us for this week. Thank you for staying engaged. Be safe, be kind, and have a great weekend and we will be back here again on Monday.