



Messenger

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Test Catalog Update

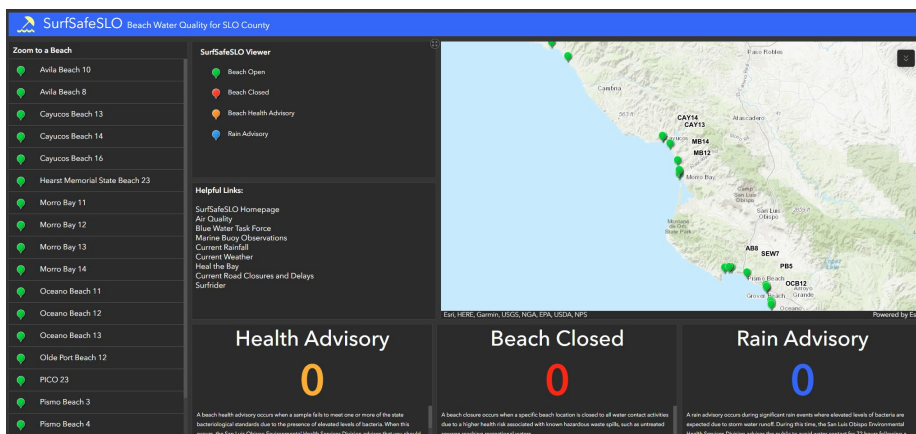
On May 20, the County of San Luis Obispo (SLO) introduced a proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors for fiscal year 2025-2026. The budget recommends cuts to certain departments, including staff and service reductions at the Public Health Laboratory, to help balance County finances. To align with the proposed reductions, the laboratory will be consolidating its test catalog by:

- Phasing out low-demand tests (for example, tests with <10 requests/year)
 - Tests to be phased out are: 1) blood lead testing, 2) bacteriologic respiratory culture, 3) urine culture and susceptibilities, 4) ova and parasite examination, 5) pinworm prep, 6) special parasite direct exam, 7) Varicella Zoster (i.e., chickenpox) immunity, 8) norovirus surveillance, and 9) A-1 thermotolerant coliform testing.
- Altering the frequency of certain tests
 - For example, HIV and syphilis testing are to be scheduled twice weekly.
- Restricting Sunday testing to emergency response only

These changes will take effect on July 1, 2025. Test information will also be updated on the [laboratory's website](#).

Ocean Water Quality

From April to October each year, the SLO Public Health Laboratory, in collaboration with Environmental Health, monitors ocean water quality at 19 beaches across the county. Water samples are collected on a weekly basis to analyze the bacterial load of total coliforms, *E. coli*, and enterococci at representative beach sites. These indicator organisms provide a bacteriologic signal of ocean water safety for recreational activities, such as surfing and swimming. Safe surfing is another way the laboratory contributes to the health of the central coast community! The latest information on health advisories and beach closures can be found on the [Ocean Water Quality Monitoring homepage](#).



Water Dropoff Locations

The laboratory will continue to offer bacteriologic testing of drinking waters as a service to the public. Beginning July 1, there will be two locations to drop off samples for water testing:

- San Luis Obispo Health Department at 2191 Johnson Ave SLO, 93401
 - Sample drop-off by 3:30 pm
 - Phone: (805) 781-5508
- Paso Robles Health Department at 805 4th Street, Suite #201 Paso Robles, 93446
 - Sample drop-off by 11 am
 - Phone: (805) 237-3050

For any further assistance, contact the laboratory at (805) 781-5508.

Staff Recognition

The SLO Public Health Laboratory would like to recognize Cameron Saunders for his dedicated service to the County as a Public Health Microbiologist. Cameron has been an integral part of the laboratory team for more than 5 years, serving as key contributor in both day-to-day testing as well as pandemic response, and excelling as an expert analyst and trainer in the mycobacteriology section.

Cameron will be joining the Scripps Institute in La Jolla as a Clinical Laboratory Scientist at the end of June. We wish him every success in both his personal and professional life!



Questions?

Please contact the Laboratory Director by email or phone.

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