

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/coa>

Meeting Date: Wednesday February 26, 2025

Time: 10:00 am - Noon

Location: DSS Building, 3433 South Higuera Street, Room #101, SLO

- ✓ Call to Order
- ✓ Flag Salute (please stand if able)
- ✓ Check/announce meeting being recorded.
- ✓ Public Comment and Member/Agency Updates – *burning desires from members or guests about current concerns, issues, events* - 2 min. max

Introductions: Members and Guests (please provide your name, Commission position, and brief agency description)

Member rollcall: Chair establish Quorum.

Approve Minutes: January 22, 2025

**Presentation: How Hoarding Impacts Our Community
Information & Support Panel Discussion**

Multiple Presenters discussing these topics:

**Ability to Care for Hoarders – Social Services Supervisor
Animal Hoarding – Animal Services Manager
Emergency Response – SLO County Sheriff's Office
Health Impacts from Hoarding – Sierra Vista Hospital
Financial Impacts for Hoarders – Professional Fiduciary
Clean-up Challenges – Certified Hoarding Clean-out Specialist**

Break 10 minutes

Reports:

ASPC (5 min) – Jerry Mihaic

AAA (5 min) – Susannah Fenton

Scam Report – Tristin O'Neil

Membership Update and Co-Chair Report – Anita and Maryanne

Next Meeting: March 26, 2025

DSS Building, 3433 South Higuera Street, Room #101, SLO

***Please submit agenda and program items, ideas, and feedback to
slocommissiononaging@gmail.com***

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING
Department of Social Services Building, Conference Room #101 3433 South Higuera,
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
February 26th, 2025 Minutes

Members Present: Maryanne Zarycka, Sue Gibson, Kristin Allen, Jerry Mihaic, Jessica Yates, Paul Worsham, Anita Shower, Danielle Raiss, Mike Bossenberry, Claryce Knupper, Alexis Okumura, Louise Justice, Jamie Moothart, Ilene Brill, Paulina Flores Jimenez, Paige Anderson, Dianna Votaw, Laura Edwards, Susannah Fenton, Isabella

Members Absent: Charmaine Petersen, Kristy Edwards (resigned Feb 2025)

Call to Order: 10:00 am

Flag Salute.

"Meeting is Being Recorded" Announcement

Public Comment:

Sue Gibson

- March 5th at Hilton Garden In 10:00am-11:30am workshop covering topics from State Planning, Financial Planning, Senior Housing Planning. Few spots are still available.

Kristin Allen

- Paso Robles Senior Center February 27th 10:00am-11:30 am Healthy Body Healthy Brain come join!

Jerry Mihaic

- Senior Fair in Santa Maria March 14th 9:00am-12:00pm at the Allan Hancock College

Jessica Yates

- National Crime Victims' Rights April 3rd 11:00am-1:00pm Katcho Achadjian Goc Center Board of Supervisors Chamber 1055 Monterey St San Luis Obispo CA 93408

Laura DeLoye

- Education class February 27th in Paso Robles
- A flyer provided monthly education class primarily for dementia caregivers
- List of support groups for caregivers

Paul Worsham

- March 8th Women's Veterans Resource Fair at the SLO Veterans Hall. The first one being held.

Nicole Bennett

- Director of CalAIM Programs at the Santa Maria Wisdom Center
- Mentioned all services provided

Mike Bossenberry

- Team of CalPoly Seniors created a project seeking input through hospice learning grief and loss and its effect on physical and mental health

Approval of January 2025 Minutes: First motion was made by Mike Bossenberry to accept January 2025_minutes second motion made by Kristin Allen. All in favor - passed

Presentation:

**How Hoarding Impacts Our Community Information & Support Panel Discussion
VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP)**

- Ability to Care for Hoarders – Social Services Supervisor
- Animal Hoarding - Animal Services Manager
- Emergency Response – SLO County Sheriff's Office
- Health Impacts from Hoarding – Sierra Vista Hospital
- Financial Impacts for Hoarders – Professional Fiduciary
- Clean-up Challenges – Certified Hoarding Clean-out Specialist

Hoarding Definition vs. Clutterer or a Squalor

Hoarding is far more common in the United States and North America than anywhere in the world.

- **Clutterer**
 - Clutter by choice
 - Lacks discipline (lazy)
 - Lacks the knowledge in how to properly store belongings
- **Squalor**
 - Extreme filth, especially if a result of poverty or neglect
- **Hoarder**
 - Effective 2013, it is considered a serious mental disorder apart from OCD diagnosis
 - Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions due to a perceived need to save the items
 - Their behavior causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning

Three Main Types of Hoarding

- **Object Hoarding**
 - Excessive accumulation of items, usually low value items
 - Emotional attachments (they will need in the future or sentimental value)
- **Animal Hoarding**
 - Individuals collect many animals but are unable to properly care for them
 - Unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions
 - Often owners do not recognize the harm caused to the animals
- **Digital Hoarding**
 - Excessive accumulation of digital files (emails, photos and documents)
 - Disorganization leads to high anxiety and stress due to lost files

- Typically leads to isolation and strained relationships

Typical Reasons Given for Hoarding Behavior

Age 11-13 years: Signs of hoarding behaviors can begin to show

Age 13-20 years: Medium age for the onset of symptoms

Age 35-45 years: Symptoms intensify

Age 50+ years: Average age of a person seeking treatment for hoarding.

Without effective treatment, individuals who hoard often endure a lifelong struggle with hoarding. They tend to live alone and may have a family member with the problem.

- Emotional Attachment
- Fear of Waste
- Memory Preservation
- Control and Safety
- Aesthetic Appreciation
- Avoidance of Decision-Making

Community Resources for Hoarding Support; Today's Panelists

1. Social Services & Hoarding
Amanda Servin, MA
Social Worker Supervisor
County of San Luis Obispo
2. Dangers of Animal Hoarding
Eric Anderson, DVM
Animal Services Manager
County of San Luis Obispo
3. Impact on Emergency Responders
Sargent Slaughter and Deputy Love
Sheriff's Department
County of San Luis Obispo
4. Financial Impact on Seniors
Debra Trout
Licensed Fiduciary Services
Trout and Associates
5. Hoarding Task Force Committee
Claryce Knupper
Certified Hoarding Cleanup Specialist
Owner, Central Coast Transitions LLC

Social Services & Hoarding

- Adult Protective Services Is a **voluntary** program

- Adult Protective Services
Response time
- Services and Case Management
Referrals
Advocacy
- Funding
Lack there of
- Multi-Disciplinary Team
Team approach for best results
- Success Stories
Overcoming difficult circumstances

Dangers of Animal Hoarding

- **Definition & Types of Animal Hoarding**
 - Overwhelmed Caregiver
 - Rescuer
 - Exploitive
 - Institutional
- **Psychopathology of Animal Hoarders**
 - Delusional Disorder
 - Dementia
 - Addiction
 - Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
 - Attachment Disorder / Trauma Response
- **Health and Welfare Issues**
 - Human Concerns
 - Animal Concerns
- **Processes for Addressing Issues**
 - Challenges
 - Outcomes
 - Opportunities

Hoarding Increases the Difficulty of Rescues

Hoarding's Direct Impact on the Increase of Emergency Incidents

- **Structural Integrity**
 - Floors (collapse from weight)
 - Pipes, appliances, etc.
- **Fire Hazards**
 - Flammable items
 - Space heaters
- **Volume of Belongings**

- Tripping hazards
- Buried alive from collapsed piles
- **Decay / Decomposition**
 - Mold
 - Animal feces and infestations
- **Harmful Biohazards**
 - Toxic and Infectious
- **Personal Health**
 - Hygiene
 - Respiratory diseases and infections
 - Nutrition

Hoardings' Direct Impact on First Responders

- **Physical**
 - Limited access to the structure
 - Tripping hazards
 - Falling objects
 - Poor air quality
 - Biological hazards
 - Animal bites
- **Emotionally**
 - Stress and anxiety
 - Moral distress
 - PTSD potential
- **Operational**
 - Difficulty assessing situations (source of fire)
 - Extended response time (additional time required to reach someone in need of help)
 - Need for specialized equipment
 - Special safety protocols and training

The Financial Consequences of Hoarding

- **Financial Consequences**
 - Financial mismanagement (i.e., unpaid bills, excessive spending)
 - Risk of eviction, foreclosure, legal fines due to property violations
 - Identification of hidden wealth
 - Increased insurance costs or policy cancellations
- **Fiduciary Role**
 - Assist with regaining financial stability by managing income
 - Establish financial oversight, bill paying

- Educating families and guiding them on intervention options
- Partnering with social services and legal professionals to secure resources
- Develop strategies for long-term care and housing stability - safely aging in place or transitioning to alternative housing
- Provide oversight to prevent financial exploitation
- **Estate Planning & Risk to Heirs**
 - Ensuring legal documents are in place
 - Acts a facilitators in difficult family situations

Understanding the Impact of Hoarding

Hoarding's Direct Impact on the Hoarder

Cognitive behavioral therapy has shown the most success, with 70% of patients experiencing positive results. <https://namimass.org>

Comprehensive hoarding treatment typically also involves support groups and medication. www.therecoveryvillage.com/mental-health/hoarding/treatment/

Hoarding's Five Level Rating Scale

- Level 1: Low: At this level, the home is generally neat and organized with minimal clutter.
- Level 2: Guarded: Clutter begins to accumulate. Items might be piled in certain areas, but movement in the house is still possible.
- Level 3: Elevated: Clutter may partially block key living spaces, such as kitchens or bathrooms, making them less usable.
- Level 4: High: Rooms are difficult to move through, and important living spaces are unusable.
- Level 5: Severe: The home (and property) is overwhelmed with clutter, making it nearly impossible to move through.

• **Health**

- Respiratory issues
 - Mold, mildew, and fungus exposure
 - Ammonia from decaying waste
 - Uric acid from pet and human urine
 - Poor ventilation from broken heating systems
- Sanitation Issues
 - Plumbing broken, backed up, etc.
 - Spread of diseases from pets, rodents, bug infestations (defecation and death)
- Nutrition issues
 - Food poisoning – eating spoiled food
 - Diabetes – quantity and quality of food
 - Alcoholism

- **Safety**
 - Fire hazards
 - Build-up of flammable items, clutter around open flames (*approx. 25% of deaths by house fire - due to hoarding*)
 - Trip and fall hazards
 - Objects falling or stacks collapsing (causes entrapment)
 - Structure hazards
 - Lack of routine home maintenance (flooring, roofs, plumbing, windows, etc.)
 - Structural damage to the building from increased weight and volume of clutter
- **Financial**
 - Risk of foreclosure, eviction or homelessness
 - Increase medical expenses that they can't afford

Hoarders' Direct Impact on the Community

- **Affects on Neighborhood**
 - Unsightliness spreads from inside to outside
 - Decreased values in home prices
 - Flooding caused by broken pipes
 - Backed-up sewage issues
 - Pest infestation due to condition of property
- **Affects to the City**
 - Loss of property taxes due to abandoned property
 - Increased costs due to emergency incidents for fires, falls, and health issues
- **Affects to the County**
 - Increased expenses to County services (warrants, citations, animal services, and mental health)
 - Draining county non-profit and senior organization resources

San Luis Obispo County Hoarding Task Force

The first hoarding task force in the United States began in 1989 in Fairfax County, Virginia. Since then, the number of hoarding task forces has grown to 75 communities throughout the US to help coordinate care.

California Task Force Committees:

- *Los Angeles County*
- *Marin County*
- *San Bernadino County*
- *San Francisco City*
- *San Mateo County*

Proposed Task Force Mission

- A coordinated approach by multi-agency and community resources

Purpose: Individual and Community Resource Support

- Collaborative efforts to maximize available resources and address service limitations
- Development of compassionate strategies paired with enforcement, remediation, and legal action as needed
- Responds to requests for help from:
 - Hoarder themselves or a family member
 - Resources, non-profit organization
 - Government offices
- Maintains a "Hoarding-Specific Resource Directory"
- Provides crisis and emergency support

SLO Co. Hoarding Task Force

- To raise awareness of hoarding by developing collaborative efforts of local services and resources
- To identify gaps in services and needs in the community
- To discuss complex cases, refer to each other, and build relationships
- To keep the health, safety, and dignity of the individual hoarder a priority

Professional and Volunteer Response Team Goals

- Comprehensive strategic approach
- Improve communication and response
- Earlier intervention efforts
- Improve community safety
- Share resourcing which reduces community costs
- Increase community education and awareness

If you are interested in helping develop the San Luis Obispo County Hoarding Task Force, please email me at:

claryce@centralcoasttransitions.com

Reports were postponed – Hoarding Panel was a success and filled the meeting time!

Next Meeting: March 26th, 2025 at Conference Room #101 3433 South Higuera, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Minutes submitted by Gabriela Garcia. Reviewed by Co-Chairs.