

March 16, 2020

Hospice San Luis Obispo County (HSLO) has been monitoring the ever-changing Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation to develop a response and mitigation plan.

HSLO endeavors to take proactive steps to help protect its staff, clients, patients, volunteers, and community members. According to the CDC, "From the limited data that is available, it is possible that older adults, and persons who have underlying chronic medical conditions, such as immunocompromising conditions, may be at risk for more severe outcomes." This describes a significant demographic of people served by HSLO. Other considerations are the extended incubation period of the virus where people can be infected with the virus and be asymptomatic making difficult to know who has the virus. Current limited testing availability for the virus greatly adds to our community's uncertainty.

The San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department urged businesses, agencies, and other organizations in our county to develop a "social distancing plan" to limit person-to-person contact; this type of plan will likely play an integral role in reducing the number of people potentially exposed to the virus and therefore slowing community spread. We considered how we can continue to serve our community while also taking preemptive protective measures.

With these factors in mind, HSLO is taking the proactive step of implementing its social distancing plan sooner rather than later. As of this writing, there are two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our community. Again, the concern is that we already serve an at-risk population through our In-Home Respite Care, Grief Counseling, End-Of-Life Doula Program, Care Management Services, Threshold Singers, Pet Peace of Mind Program, Community Response and Heart-In-Hand Services. We want to do our part in slowing the spread of this virus to mitigate overwhelming available medical services, personnel and equipment. As a result, we are modifying the ways we deliver client services to limit person-to-person contact.

Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 through March 31, 2020 at a minimum and possibly up to 8 weeks, HSLO's SLO office will remain open but closed to the general public and we will support existing clients in the following ways:

- Individual Grief Counseling will be conducted either by phone therapy or virtual means
- Support Groups will be available through virtual means
- In-home Respite Care and End-Of-Life Doula Services will be supported on a case-by-case basis and only with approval and in direction of HSLO staff.
- Care Management Services will continue to be delivered through phone support and virtual means



- Threshold Singers, Pet Peace of Mind, Community Response and Heart-in-Hand Services will be suspended until they can be safely provided within CDC, State and local public health agency guidelines.
- HSLO's other community events, meetings, and gatherings will be suspended through this period and future events will be assessed based on CDC and local public health guidelines.

Since this is a rapidly evolving situation, it is very likely these measures will be extended beyond March 31 or altered to address new issues. HSLO will continue to monitor any changes and adjust our response plan accordingly.

HSLO believes that by taking the above actions, we are proactively addressing this community crisis. It is our hope that through these service changes we will continue to meet the needs of the community while also doing our part to stem the tide of the Coronavirus pandemic.

For questions or future direction on this matter please visit our website at [www.hospiceslo.org](http://www.hospiceslo.org) or call our office at 805-544-2266.

Please take care of yourself and for the most credible and up to date COVID-19 information, visit [SLO County Public Health Department](#) and the [Center for Disease Control](#).

