

Health Research Study Fact Sheet

Community Engagement and Participation

The community will be engaged in the process early and often through regular outreach events and the formation of the Community Advisory Group. The Community Advisory Group was formed to help design and influence the Health Research Study by providing informed input and feedback on behalf of Northwestern San Fernando Valley communities on all aspects of the Health Research Study. Information for the community will also be available through a website, e-Newsletter, and occasional scheduled updates at Neighborhood Council meetings. To register for updates and learn more about opportunities to participate, visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/healthresearch/>.

In October 2015, the largest natural gas blowout in the history of the United States began at the Southern California Gas Company's Aliso Canyon natural gas storage facility. As a result of the disaster, some people experienced foul odors, oily mists, and acute health symptoms, including eye, nose, and throat irritation, headaches, and respiratory symptoms. Presently, there are also concerns about how the exposure may be linked to cancers, mental health conditions, and other serious long-term health outcomes.

The four-month long disaster led to numerous complaints of illness and displaced over 20,000 residents from their homes. Many residents reported ongoing health problems when

returning home after relocation and expressed concerns about potential long-term health effects related to the gas blowout. The Aliso settlement approved by the Los Angeles Superior Court in 2019 ordered the Southern California Gas Company to provide \$25 million in funding to conduct a long-term Health Research Study, administered by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health (Public Health). Public Health continues to receive reports of symptoms from community members and continues to work towards community recovery in the aftermath of this disaster.



Aliso Canyon Disaster
Health Research Study

Purpose

A long-term public health study is usually a multi-year study of the impact of an event or condition on human health. In this case, Public Health will administer a Health Research Study in collaboration with a Scientific Oversight Committee and a Community Advisory Group. The research will help Public Health, community residents and other interested parties understand the potential short- and long-term health impacts from the disaster on Porter Ranch and the surrounding communities.

FAQs

1. What is the process and timeline for the Health Research Study?

Before research can begin, Public Health will release a solicitation for research proposals in spring of 2021. Public Health anticipates that the first research contract will be awarded in summer of 2021. The official Health Research Study begins with the first signed research contract. The research will progress until the three-year mark, at which point the Scientific Oversight Committee will evaluate progress to date. The Scientific Oversight Committee will determine at this juncture whether the research will continue or not. If the Health Research Study continues, these evaluations will occur annually until the Scientific Oversight Committee is confident that the objectives of the Health Research Study can be met.

2. Where and how can I sign up for the Health Research Study?

Study participation will be decided by individual researchers and will depend on many factors, such as research methodology. Medical records and other personal information are not being sought for the Health Research Study at this time. To participate in relevant studies or to receive regular updates visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/healthresearch/>.

3. What is Public Health's function and role in the Health Research Study?

Public Health will manage and administer the Health Research Study, including requesting proposals from outside scientists and researchers to conduct the scientific research.

4. What is the Community Advisory Group?

The Community Advisory Group was formed to help design and influence the Health Research Study by providing informed input and feedback on behalf of Northwestern San Fernando Valley communities on all aspects of the Health Research Study. Through the Community Advisory Group, area residents will be able to provide input on health study topics of interest.

5. What is the Scientific Oversight Committee?

Due to the complexity and unprecedented nature of the disaster, an expert oversight committee has been tasked with addressing scientific issues and priorities. This committee is responsible for reviewing the available environmental and health data, determining the most appropriate methodology and monitoring progress. The Scientific Oversight Committee will:

- Provide guidance on the Study's focus and priorities
- Review research plans and evaluate progress
- Provide scientific advice to Public Health and researchers