



December Newsletter

Year in Review

Dear Community Member,

We hope that you and your family are staying healthy during this unprecedented time. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought so many changes and challenges to our lives



that were all but impossible to foresee at the start of the year. Throughout the year, significant progress was made on laying the foundation for the Aliso Canyon Disaster Health Research Study (ACDHRS). While there is still much to be accomplished, below is a snapshot of the milestones from 2020.

Scientific Oversight Committee

2020 was a pivotal year for the ACDHRS with the establishment of the Scientific Oversight Committee (SOC). Comprised of esteemed experts from the fields of epidemiology, disaster research, environmental health, medicine, toxicology, air modeling and community-based research, the SOC's role is to shape the \$25 million Health Study by determining the study's goals and priorities. The SOC met five times in 2020 and those discussions, as well as information presented by the Community Advisory Group, have informed the draft Goals & Priorities document that is currently underway. In early 2021, the broader public will have an opportunity to review and provide feedback on that draft. This input is critical to our success and we look forward to hearing from you. The SOC is also advising Public Health on important aspects of data collection and the research solicitation process.

Community Engagement

Community engagement has been essential to the planning of the Health Study and as a preface to the virtual events that took place, a Communications Preferences Survey



was sent out in May. Survey answers were anonymous, and helped us determine the best ways to proceed with community engagement in 2020.



A Community Opinion Survey of 400 residents who live within 10 miles of the Aliso Canyon gas storage facility was conducted to inform the SOC on community concerns and priorities for the Health Study. In August, focus group discussions with residents near the SoCalGas Aliso Canyon gas storage facility were completed and covered a broad range of topics including health impacts, safety concerns, and public trust.

The survey was developed with input from the CAG and led by an independent research firm. Upon the request of the CAG, the survey was made available in an online version on the ACDHRS website which remained open for approximately 30 days.

On September 30th, Public Health hosted a Virtual Town Hall to hear from community members impacted by the blowout and provided information on the Health Study. The Virtual Town Hall was also an opportunity for the community to ask questions and take part in an event that brought community awareness and engagement to the forefront.

 Visit [Public Health's YouTube Channel](#) to watch the Town Hall recording.

Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Facility

In addition, during the month of August, Public Health took samples from waste bins containing materials from the Aliso Canyon blowout and well-control operations. Public Health sought expert advice from the Scientific Oversight Committee (SOC) to



guide the waste bin sampling and chemical testing. These samples were tested for an extensive array of oil and gas chemicals. After reviewing the test results, the SOC recommended that additional samples be collected and stored for future use by the Health Study researchers if needed. Public Health and a third-party contractor were able to return to the Aliso Canyon gas storage facility and collected additional samples and stored them for potential future use and research.

Additionally, in response to community members' current concerns about cancer in the neighborhoods near Aliso Canyon, Public Health connected Community Advisory Group members with researchers at the [Los Angeles County Cancer Surveillance Program \(CSP\)](#). CSP is the population-based cancer registry for Los Angeles County and routinely collects and analyzes information on all new cancer diagnoses made among residents of the County. Over the past 8 months, a subcommittee of CAG and SOC members collaborated with CSP researchers to develop a plan for investigating cancer rates using data from the CSP database. The subcommittee helped determine the scope and design of the investigation.

Stay Informed

Subscribe to [Public Health's monthly newsletter](#) for future Health Study updates. Please visit the [ACDHRS web page](#) for project updates and announcements. .

If you missed the update presentation given at your local Neighborhood Council, you can now download the presentation slides by [clicking here](#).



[Click here](#) to view the ongoing community feedback log.



Upcoming Meetings



The Health Study team is currently planning several public meetings for next year. Once finalized, the meeting schedule will be available on the ACDHRS webpage. To access past meeting agendas, summaries, and other materials, please visit the [ACDHRS webpage](#).

****Public comments shared during these meetings are recorded and will be reviewed as a community priority when providing direction for the Health Research Study.***

For more information on the Aliso Canyon Disaster Health Research Study, please visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/healthresearch/>