



2018 ANTELOPE VALLEY BOARD OF TRADE

Antelope Valley Healthcare Strengths and Needs

The Antelope Valley Board of Trade's mission is to provide constructive policy guidance on development of trade and commerce for a growing region, the fastest growing region of Los Angeles County. That said, the key indicators for healthy and sustained growth follow in three large baskets: public safety, education, and public health. This report addresses the health care challenges, with a view toward the necessary health care outcomes required to develop and sustain healthy growth. It can be difficult to measure or describe precisely what defines a crisis. This much is accurate – the Antelope Valley region of north Los Angeles County, which includes portion of Kern County, faces profoundly serious health challenges.

From statistics compiled from key U.S. Census Data, and Los Angeles County's Key Indicators of Health, it becomes evident that the Antelope Valley leads in a complex map of negative health indicators. Data aggregated for this report covers the Los Angeles County portion of the Antelope Valley, where the majority of the Antelope Valley's approximately half-million residents live, residing in the incorporated cities of Palmdale and Lancaster, and outlying unincorporated communities, which includes East Kern. A subsequent report will gather relevant Kern County data as available. The Antelope Valley comprises the largest by area service sector of Los Angeles County, known for government measuring as Service Provider Area 1.

Background

In a way, the Antelope Valley is a victim of its own success, with population surging from the mid-1980s through the Great Recession of 2008, when growth slowed, but did not stop.

There is a context for the region's health challenge, that resides in that rapid rate of growth, with ultimately a surge in lower-income residents finding an affordable housing base. The Valley's poverty rate of 21.4% of population is exceeded only by core (Metro) Los Angeles and South Los Angeles. That said, the region possesses key strengths and reasons for optimism.

Los Angeles County Snapshot

Los Angeles County is the most populous county in the United States, home to more than 10 million people. It is a major driver of California's demographics, comprising roughly 27% of the state's total population of 38-plus million people.

On its own, Los Angeles County would be the eighth most populous state in the country. Los Angeles County encompasses over 4,000 square miles. The County offers a diversity of landscapes within its 88 incorporated cities, 140 unincorporated areas, and the San Clemente and Santa Catalina islands. Communities range from dense urban neighborhoods, to rural areas in the deserts and mountains.

Because of its large size, the County of Los Angeles has divided the region into eight geographic areas called Service Planning Areas (SPAs). These distinct regions are used by several County departments as well as community health and human service agencies for the purpose of planning and delivery of services. The Antelope Valley is located in SPA 1. The other Service Planning Areas are SPA 2-San Fernando Valley; SPA 3-San Gabriel; SPA 4- Metro LA; SPA 5-West LA County; SPA 6-South LA County; SPA 7-East LA County; and SPA 8-South Bay. For purposes of this report, only SPA 1, the Antelope Valley, is considered, except for use of other SPA regions for comparison purposes.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) publishes a plethora of data reports that provide information on the health status of each of the SPAs. Material in this report is obtained from DPH's "Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area" published most recently in 2017.

Health Markers

■ All Cause Mortality

- 775.8 deaths per age adjusted 100,000, highest rate in Los Angeles County, worse than national average.

■ Cancer

The Antelope Valley area leads Los Angeles County in cancer deaths.

- Lung Cancer, 42.5 per age adjusted 100,000, highest rate in the county, and worse than national average.
- Breast Cancer, 24.1 deaths per age adjusted 100,000, again, highest in county, worse than

national average

- Colorectal cancer, 16.8 deaths per age adjusted 100,000, same rankings.

■ **Overweight-Obesity**

- Rates are 29.6% of L.A. County populations, second highest in county.
- Diabetes rates are 13.9% of population, highest in L.A. County
- Diabetes Death, 32 per age adjusted 100,000, 2nd highest rate in Los Angeles County.

■ **Cardiovascular Health**

- Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) 30.3%, highest in Los Angeles County, worse than national average.
- Coronary Disease Death Rate, 148.4 per age adjusted 100,000, highest in Los Angeles County, worse than national average.
- Stroke Death Rate, 38.4 per 100,000 population, worse than national average.
- Motor Vehicle Crashes, 16.2 per 100,000 population, highest in Los Angeles County, worse than national average.
- Suicide, 8.6 per 100,000 population, a 3-way tie for Service Areas that include the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys and South Bay.
- Health/Mental Health issues limiting daily activity, 3.2%, highest rate in Los Angeles County, worse than national average.

■ **Mental Health**

- Depression, 12.5% reporting depression, highest rate in Los Angeles County, worse than national average.

■ **Respiratory Disease**

- Cardio Pulmonary Obstructive Disease (COPD) and Emphysema, 58.9 per age adjusted 100,000, highest rate in Los Angeles County and worse than national average.

■ **Disabilities/Special Needs**

- Antelope Valley region has Los Angeles County's highest percentage of population with disabilities-special needs, with 30.3% of adults, and 23.1% of children, 0-17.

■ **Homelessness**

- The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted in March 2018, to declare a "shelter crisis" in the Antelope Valley owing to a disproportionate surge in homelessness, with the overall homeless count increasing from about 3,000 to 4,500 in the most recent "point in time" county. The vote secured an extension on "winter shelter" currently housed at the former L.A. County High Desert Hospital site, extending the emergency period through 10-

31-18, utilizing access to Measure H homelessness reduction funds that were voter-approved in 2016. It is understood, that as with the rest of Los Angeles County, an urgent response is required to reduce homelessness and stabilize populations living without fixed shelter or address.

A Brighter View – A Glass Half Full

While the health challenges are considerable, rates of health coverage insurance measure at 94.9% for children aged 0-17, and at 88% in the adult population. Regular sources of health care are available, according to L.A. County Key Indicators, for 95% of children, 0-17 and 79.7% of adult population.

In the mid-range of education, where the majority of people live and work, the Antelope Valley has a high rate of adults with some college, associate degree, or post-high school trade education, 36.2% of adult population.

The Antelope Valley is known for its informally recognized borders and geographic range spanning the Tehachapi Mountains to the north and the foothills of Acton-Agua Dulce to the south, the San Bernardino County border to the east, and to the far west of the Kern County border past Gorman.

The Antelope Valley retains a highly skilled workforce active in the fields of education and healthcare services and its historic industrial reputation with the United States aerospace military employment establishments that form the largest element of regional economy.

However, with education and public health ranking as key attractants for development, poor health affects the productivity and economic growth of a community, which imposes a significant challenge that demands a regional community response. This requires legislative and public resource commitment at the regional, state, and national level to successfully address these challenges.

Antelope Valley Strengths and Resources

The Antelope Valley possesses strengths and resources on the health care front. The more than 420 beds of Antelope Valley Hospital serve the area that ranges from East Kern County to the foothills of Agua Dulce, west to Gorman, and east to the San Bernardino County Line. The Antelope Valley Healthcare District recently achieved voter-approval to shift to non-profit status with an expanded board and new governance structure that may pave the way for a revenue bond that would fund the hundreds of millions of dollars needed for an expanded, state-of-the-art 21st century hospital.

Palmdale Regional Medical Center is new, and represents high-quality service and infrastructure. The Valley has significant presence from quality managed-care health providers such as Kaiser Permanente and High Desert Medical Group. The area also has quality non-profits that address the mental health service area, such as Mental Health America Enrichment Services of the Antelope Valley, and Valley Oasis, which addresses domestic violence, and the Coordinated Entry System of L.A. County to reduce homelessness, as well as the Children's Center, and Children's Bureau, focusing on the protection and

wellbeing of children.

The Antelope Valley Partners for Health non-profit, works in concert with services for the most needy through the Antelope Valley Community Clinic. It also functions as a major nutrition education and provider agency, as well as the Valley's health research arm.

Los Angeles County opened its Michael D. Antonovich County Health Center, with an array of services for residents who have serious needs, and lack means. All of these groups, and others that work with them, such as Salvation Army and the Red Cross, Grace Resource Center and other non-profits represent a community strength response to the region's health challenges.

More support is needed, however, owing to the historical contest of the Antelope Valley, as a once under-served, rural area, that is now an under-served mixed rural and urban area. This calls for a response that is concomitant to the Antelope Valley's population growth of the last quarter century, and that has not happened yet. This requires the attention of the region's corporate leadership, and the local, county, state and federal government's stewardship. These also fall in the area of constructive activity and attention by the Antelope Valley Board of Trade and its dedicated membership and leadership.

Areas Requiring Attention and Response

- **Grant funding and tax-supported revenue response to reduce and remedy area homelessness.**
- **Grant funding and tax-supported revenue response and infrastructure investment to support mental health services.**
- **Expanded response to support improvements in delivery of veterans health care.**
- **Support for an expansion and bond support to build a new main Antelope Valley Hospital rather than "patching and painting" the current AV Hospital campus.**
- **General support for health insurance, an investment to prevent the region's neediest and most vulnerable citizens shifting from unhealthy to crisis mode, i.e. the hepatitis outbreak that erupted in San Diego County, and the displaced tent city communities of Los Angeles and Orange counties.**
- **Support of recruitment and retention of the region's physician base, with particular attention to mental health services.**
- **Support for tobacco reduction programs, and nutrition programs to reduce diabetes, encourage healthy diet habits.**

Conclusions

Clearly, the Antelope Valley continues to cope with, and manage an array of serious health, and healthcare challenges. The Valley also has a variety of resources and strengths, that with greater coordination of effort, and support, can be harnessed to meet those challenges. The Antelope Valley Board of Trade remains ready as a group that can be assistive in advancing the problem solving process to successfully meet these challenges.

