Date: March 5, 2020, 7:30 PM
Contact: Jennifer Shay, Public Information Officer,
              805-781-4773, jshay@co.slo.ca.us

SLO County Resident Tests Negative for COVID-19

San Luis Obispo, CA— Late this afternoon, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department received laboratory test results confirming a local resident does not have COVID-19, also known as coronavirus.

As announced earlier today, the County Public Health Department tested the individual "out of an abundance of caution." Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein had said County Public Health "decided to proceed with testing this specimen although our suspicion of illness remains low."

County Public Health sent the specimen to the California Department of Public Health Laboratory for testing, which was able to perform the test days sooner than the state had previously stated. In late February, the CDC expanded testing capabilities for COVID-19 to state public health laboratories, and later to some local public health laboratories. The expanded testing capabilities resulted in much faster test results in recent days. Within the next two days, the Public Health Department Laboratory is expected to be capable of performing COVID-19 testing as well.

While most tests for COVID-19 in the United States are negative for the virus, health officials continue diligently screening and testing when appropriate.

The County does not have any confirmed cases of COVID-19 at this time. As Dr. Borenstein stated earlier today, "The risk to the general public at this moment remains low" and that County Public Health "will notify our residents if and when we do have a confirmed case in our county."

###