



Arroyo Grande Community Hospital

A member of CHW

Dear Community Member,

Lately there has been a lot of news in our local media about possible changes to the Trauma System in San Luis Obispo County. Improvements to the system is something I strongly agree should be made, but how best to do that is complicated and should be viewed from all sides of the issues.

The Trauma System for San Luis Obispo County should meet the needs of everyone in the community. It's critical to look at the whole program as we explore all of the options available. How these possible changes could affect all areas of the county should be reviewed very carefully. After careful consideration, please take look at our perspective on what we believe would best serve our community and this county in regards to trauma care. Please feel free to contact me if you have comments and would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Rick Castro  
President, CEO  
Arroyo Grande Community Hospital

# Does SLO County Need a Designated Trauma Center?

A brief perspective from French Hospital Medical Center and Arroyo Grande Community Hospital



**Trauma care in San Luis Obispo County can and should be improved.** The question is how best to do that. There are two choices: 1) Redistribute our limited resources (trauma physicians, ambulance services, equipment, and trauma support staff) to a single facility that would meet the requirements as established by the American College of Surgeons, the State of California and San Luis Obispo County, for a Designated Trauma Center or 2) Use our current resources to strengthen existing trauma services in a Coordinated Effort shared by all our county's hospitals.

- **Where and For Whom Does a Designated Trauma Center Work Best?**  
Patients with penetrating injuries (such as knife and gun wounds) benefit from Designated Level I/II Trauma Centers where highly specialized physicians are needed, and even the slightest delay can be critical. Large urban cities have a high percentage of penetrating injuries.
- **Why Wouldn't a Designated Trauma Center Work in SLO County?**
  - 1) In SLO County, penetrating injuries make up less than 1% of emergency patients.
  - 2) A designated trauma center would require that all trauma patients who meet a fixed set of criteria be sent to that center regardless of transport time.
  - 3) The concentration of limited resources to a single designated trauma center would seriously compromise the care that the other 99% of our county's emergency patients receive, or otherwise would require a considerable investment in new, additional medical resources.
  - 4) No hospital in our county is qualified to receive a Level I Trauma Center Designation. The Level I Designation is the highest level center and exists only at teaching hospitals. Twin Cities and Arroyo Grande hospital are the number 1 and number 2 providers of trauma services, currently providing 63% of our county's trauma care. This is due in part to their proximity to the majority of trauma injuries (boating and ATV injuries). Transporting those patients to a designated trauma center located in San Luis Obispo would lengthen the amount of transport time and compromise their treatment and survival.
- **What Would Work Best for SLO County?**  
Our county's geographic character produces different kinds of traumatic injuries from those that occur in big cities. The current system requires that patients with traumatic injuries be transported to the closest hospital. To preserve and protect that system, a Coordinated Effort to share resources, enhance services, and increase communication among all four of the county's hospitals would serve all of our county's residents better — not just 1% of them.

Rick Castro, President & CEO

Alan Iftiniuk, President & CEO



**Arroyo Grande  
Community Hospital**

A member of CHW

345 South Haleyon Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
805-489-4261  
ArroyoGrandeHospital.org



**French Hospital  
Medical Center**

A member of CHW

1911 Johnson Avenue  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805-543-5353  
FrenchMedicalCenter.org

