

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

May 19, 2026

Proclaiming June 2026 as Silicosis Awareness Month

Silicosis is an occupationally acquired lung disease that can occur from the inhalation of silicon dioxide particles, also known as silica dust or respirable crystalline silica (RCS). It causes severe lung scarring and its symptoms include coughing, difficulty breathing, chest and back pain, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD). Silicosis is oftentimes fatal with most patients living less than 4 years from the onset of symptoms, but a lung transplant may provide an additional average of 3-5 years of life.

The most common cause of silicosis is occupational exposure in the fields of countertop fabrication, mining, fracking, masonry, and construction. Silicosis is particularly prevalent among occupations that involve the fabrication or cutting of engineered stone (ES) slabs. ES typically has a much higher crystalline silica content (>90%) compared to natural stone like granite (<50%) and marble (<10%). Fabrication of ES slab products can release dangerous levels of RCS into the air that workers can then inhale. ES slabs are commonly used for kitchen countertops, bathroom vanities, walls, floors, and backsplashes.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) maintains an ES-related silicosis dashboard on its website. As of April 30th, 2026, they have confirmed 551 total

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cases of ES-related silicosis, with 30 fatalities and 58 patients have received lung transplants. Latino men comprise over 97% of the confirmed silicosis diagnoses, with many of them being immigrants. Over half of the confirmed silicosis cases have been identified in Los Angeles County (County), with the San Fernando Valley (SFV) being a particular hotspot. 2026 is on track to surpass last year's total cases and experts suggest that current case numbers are likely a substantial undercount.

The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), enforces federal regulations along with even stricter state ones. Cal/OSHA approved emergency temporary standards (ETS) on RCS, making them permanent in December 2024. ETS implemented stricter standards accompanied by public awareness and education campaigns. Senate bill (SB) 20 (Menjivar) passed in September 2025, strengthens enforcement of safety regulations, increases public awareness, and improves data sharing between CDPH and Cal/OSHA. It consisted of some of the elements from Assembly bill (AB) 3043 (Rivas), which was pulled during the 2023-24 session. The other requirements from AB 3043 not in SB 20 are now under legislative consideration through AB 2137 (Chen) – including requiring CDPH and Cal/OSH to track compliance, establish a licensure system, and attaching fees to the ES shops' certifications.

The LA County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the “Silicosis Prevention Education” motion in December 2023, which invested resources to continue silicosis prevention, intervention outreach, and education throughout the County, led by the Department of Public Health's Office of Worker Health and Safety (DPH-OWHS) with support from community-based organizations. Although financial investments have lapsed, DPH continues to do outreach and engagement. DPH is also collaborating with

the Office of Immigrant Affairs to educate their staff and gain connections to community-based organizations that are serving workers (and their families) with a high risk of silicosis. Staff from OWHS and Department of Health Services (DHS) Olive View-UCLA Medical Center are working on a referral pathway and navigation plan for workers to receive critical screening and care, especially those without access. The Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch (CEO-LAIR) has continued to advocate in support of silicosis prevention and intervention proposals at the state and federal levels in accordance with existing Board policy. This includes issuing a pursuit of County advocacy in opposition to US House Resolution (HR) 5437, which would prohibit civil action against ES slab manufactures and sellers for occupational injury. As rebuilding of homes and businesses destroyed in the 2025 LA Wildfires occurs, OWHS staff are partnering with homeowners and contractors to address the silicosis epidemic, conducting outreach and engaging with industry professionals to help them understand the occupational standards and consequences that ES has on workers, along with the availability of alternative products.

The number of ES-related silicosis cases has risen drastically over the last few years. Employers, workers, and industry should have access to the education and resources necessary to protect themselves against silicosis. As such, it is important to proclaim June 2026 as Silicosis Awareness Month to bring attention to this completely preventable, debilitating, and often fatal disease.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors

- 1) Proclaim June 2026 as Silicosis Awareness Month throughout Los Angeles County (County);

- 2) Direct the County's Department of Public Health (DPH), in collaboration with the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Economic Opportunity (DEO), Mental Health (DMH), and the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) to continue their current efforts in partnering with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), the City of Los Angeles, community-based organizations, stone fabrication shops, and other stakeholders, to continue to offer education and resources on silicosis prevention and intervention, as funding and resources are available;
- 3) Direct DPH to continue its current efforts to partner with homeowners, architects, contractors, and interior designers, especially those impacted by the 2025 Los Angeles Wildfires, to ensure they have accurate information on the safe use of engineered stone products and are aware of alternative materials and products with little or no silica, as funding and resources are available;
- 4) Direct the Department of Health Services (DHS) in collaboration with DPH to continue developing a referral pathway and navigation plan for workers to receive critical screening and care at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center.
- 5) Direct the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch (CEO-LAIR), in collaboration with DPH and DHS to continue to advocate in support of proposals at the state and federal levels that strengthen regulatory standards and enhance resources and education as it relates to silicosis that is aligned with adopted County Board policies.

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