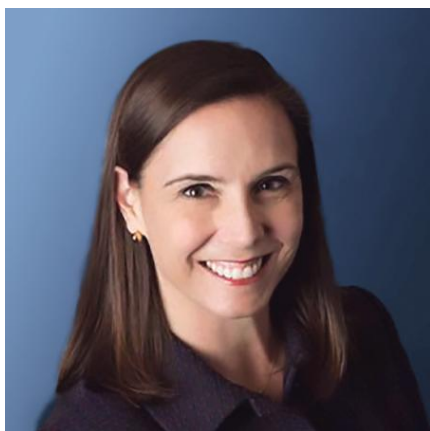


December 13, 2024 - President's Message



Dear Public Health System Leaders,

First, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who joined us for the CAPH Annual Conference. It was inspiring to see so many of you come together to connect, share insights, and learn from each other—a reminder that, as Secretary Becerra reminded us, we “don’t do mild” when it comes to advancing our mission. Our incredible speakers and panelists reminded us of the power of collaboration and innovation in addressing the challenges we face as public health systems. Thank you for making the event a success—your energy and engagement are what drive our collective mission

forward.

Following our time in Napa, several PHS leaders joined us in DC for a very successful federal lobby day. Together, we met with both of California’s Senators, over two dozen members of the House of Representatives, leaders of the Department of Health and Human Services, and White House officials. In those meetings, we conveyed the urgency of:

- Preventing cuts to Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments, emphasizing the technical fix needed for Section 203 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act to restore funding for hospitals serving dual-eligible patients;
- Extending telehealth waivers that have been instrumental in improving access to care, particularly in underserved communities;
- Securing funding for COVID-19 FEMA reimbursement to support public health systems still grappling with pandemic-related costs; and
- Our concerns about the potential for devastating cuts to Medicaid in the coming Congress and Administration.

Your presence and participation in these discussions made a real impact, highlighting the role that public health systems play in our communities and the need for federal support to sustain these efforts. Thank you again to everyone who joined us in D.C.—your voices are vital in our collective advocacy.

Wishing you and your loved ones a healthy and happy holiday season!

Erica Murray

President & CEO
California Association of Public Hospitals & Health Systems

P.S. As the holiday season approaches, we’ll be pausing our regular Policy and Program updates. Stay tuned for the first update of 2025 in the new year!

State

AB 2975 (Weapons Detection) FAQ

The California Hospital Association recently released a Frequently Asked Questions

(FAQ) document on AB 2975. As you may recall, AB 2975, which was signed into law this fall requires hospitals to install weapons detection systems, such as metal detectors, at specified entrances and have trained staff available to confiscate weapons. The document can be accessed [here](#).

CalAIM PATH CITED Round 4 Funding

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will open the application window for Round Four of PATH CITED funding on January 6, 2025. These funds support capacity-building for Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports services. To help providers prepare for the application process, DHCS has published a [Round 4](#) guidance document, [application outline](#) and [funding request](#) workbook. Several informational webinars will also be held for prospective applicants:

- **Information Session: January 7, 2025, 11:30 AM.** [Register](#)
- **Grant Application Support (Part 1): January 16, 2025.** [Register](#)
- **Grant Application Support (Part 2): February 3, 2025.** [Register](#)

Office of Health Care Affordability (OHCA) December Board Meeting

The Health Care Affordability Board will meet on [Monday, December 16, 2024](#), to continue discussion on the development of spending targets for specific health care sectors, particularly hospitals. The Board is considering setting a separate target for “high cost” hospitals and regions of the state with high spending, such as Monterey County. CAPH is continuing to closely monitor these discussions and is working to try to influence them where possible. The OHCA Board will also share its preliminary approach to establishing a behavioral health spending benchmark.

Community Health Worker (CHW) Services Now Included in Medi-Cal Dental

Effective December 1, 2024, CHW services are now a covered benefit under Medi-Cal Dental, following recent federal approval. Covered CHW services include oral health education, navigation assistance, and connections to community resources, such as translation services, interpretation, or transportation for dental visits. The new benefit aims to enhance preventive care, reduce barriers, and support Medi-Cal members in maintaining good oral health. Medi-Cal Dental providers can now bill for CHW services under the updated dental fee schedule, additional details can be found [here](#). For questions, please contact the [Medi-Cal Dental Program](#).

New Family PACT Portal Launching January 2025

Beginning January 13, 2025, the Family Planning, Access, Care, and Treatment (Family PACT) program will transition client eligibility and enrollment transaction services to a new portal. To access the new portal, Providers must ensure their site certifier contact information is current in the Provider Application and Validation for Enrollment (PAVE) portal by December 13, 2024. Providers without updated information must email their site certifier details (National Provider Identifier, first and last name, and email address) directly to the program.

Detailed access instructions will be emailed to all enrolled and actively billing Family PACT site certifiers on January 12, 2025. Training materials and webinars are available through the [Family PACT Online Training Center Learning Management System](#).

Federal

Federal Agencies Extend Telehealth Prescribing Waivers

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services have extended the telehealth prescribing waiver for controlled substances through certain telehealth modalities through December 31, 2025. This marks the third extension of these flexibilities, which permit practitioners to prescribe Schedule II–V controlled medications using audio-video technologies, and Schedule III–V narcotic medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration for opioid use disorder treatment through audio-video and/or audio-only technologies. These rules apply to all practitioner-patient relationships, not limited to those established during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The temporary ruling can be found [here](#).

Resources

Celebrating Excellence: 2024 Quality Leaders Awards

At the CAPH/SNI Annual Conference, we honored five of our members with the 2024 Quality Leaders Awards for their exceptional contributions to improving care redesign, innovation, equity, and population health across California. Learn more about this year's winners [here](#).

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