

October 25, 2024 - President's Message

Dear Public Health Care System Leaders,

Like many of you, I often find myself focused these days on the uncertainties surrounding the upcoming election. I don't need to remind us that the outcome could dramatically shape the future of public health care systems in California and nationwide.

At the national level, should former President Trump win, elements of "Project 2025" could be enacted. On the other hand, a victory for Vice President Kamala Harris could allow for continuity in certain policies, with other unknowns, such as a potential focus on hospital acquisitions, as she had as California Attorney

General.

Additionally, potential changes in Congressional leadership could dramatically shift the policy priorities in Washington, influencing how health care is funded and legislated. Here at home, California is poised for significant change, particularly in the State Legislature, with 24 of 80 open seats in the Assembly and 11 of 40 open seats in the Senate. This turnover could have lasting effects on state legislative priorities that directly impact our systems. We are closely monitoring key races at both the federal and state level, and we encourage all of you to stay informed and prepared for what may come.

While we can't predict the future, we can be as prepared as possible to chart a path forward. The CAPH Board recently met for several days to map out our strategy under different election outcome scenarios. Rest assured that CAPH will continue advocating to ensure that public health care systems remain protected. As always, we are committed to working with whomever holds office to advance the needs of our members and our communities across the state.

Sincerely,

Erica Murray
President & CEO
California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems

State**Office of Health Care Affordability October Board Meeting**

The Health Care Affordability Board met earlier this month to continue its discussion on the Board's authority to set sector-specific health care spending targets, which may include geographic regions, categories of provider organizations or payer markets, and individual health care entities although the Board has significant discretion over how to define any sectors. Several members expressed an interest in moving quickly to set certain hospital-specific targets, such as for hospitals at the top deciles of spending or that may be outliers in spending compared to the rest of the state, with a particular focus on hospitals in Monterey County. The Board appears to be on a much more aggressive timeline than what is permissible under the statute, which requires sector specific targets by June of 2028. Director Landsberg expressed some cautions that OHCA is still working

to develop a methodology to measure hospital spending growth, signaling this may be needed before the Board establishes a target for hospitals.

In addition, the Board voted to adopt a new primary care investment benchmark of 15% to encourage more spending and allocation of medical expenses to primary care. This aspirational target is meant to be reached by all payers by 2034, although no specific enforcement authority is tied to performance on this benchmark. More details can be found [here](#).

CAPH continues to monitor OHCA developments closely and engaging with members, the state, and partner organizations to best position public health care systems as these policies are developed.

CHA Webinar on Mandatory Financial Assistance Policy Updates

Legislation recently signed by the Governor, [Assembly Bill 2297](#) and [Senate Bill 1061](#), requires that hospitals update their financial assistance policies and submit them to the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) by January 1, 2025, to avoid fines. The updates include adjustments to eligibility for charity care and discount payment policies, along with revisions to definitions such as the definition of a patient's family, among others. Hospitals must also train staff on these new policies and ensure translated documents are available by the same deadline. HCAI is currently reviewing hospital policies. The California Hospital Association (CHA) will host a webinar on October 29, from 9-10:30 a.m., to discuss the new requirements, highlight common issues identified by HCAI, and outline the state's enforcement process. [Registration details can be found here](#).

Federal

CAPH Federal Lobby Day

We look forward to seeing many of you in December at CAPH's federal lobby day, held in partnership with America's Essential Hospitals (AEH). With the potential Medicaid DSH cuts looming, this event offers a critical opportunity to amplify the voices of public health care systems. The gathering kicks off on December 9 with AEH programming and guest speakers, followed by congressional meetings on December 10. *If you plan to attend, please share the names of your attendees and any meeting preferences by November 1, 2024. For more information contact [Andrea Rivera](#).*

Resources

CalAIM Justice-Involved Initiative

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) continues to host Justice-Involved (JI) Learning Collaborative sessions to support county providers, corrections departments, and other stakeholders in the roll out of the CalAIM JI initiative. An updated schedule, including registration links for upcoming events and recording links to prior events, is available [here](#).

Hospital Engagement in CalAIM

On December 6, DHCS will host a webinar showcasing best practices for hospitals in referring patients to Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports as part of their discharge planning process. Details for the webinar are as follows:
Hospital Engagement in CalAIM: Supporting Connection to ECM Services Among Eligible Medi-Cal Members

Date: December 6, 2024, | **Time:** 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. PDT

[Advance registration is required.](#)

Community Health Workers

DHCS released a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) document to address inquiries about the Medi-Cal Community Health Worker benefit. For additional questions not addressed in the document, please contact the [program directly](#).

Countdown to the 2024 CAPH/SNI Annual Conference

The 2024 CAPH/SNI Annual Conference is just around the corner, and there's still time to join us! Don't miss out — [register here](#) for the event happening December 4-6 at the beautiful Meritage Resort and Spa in Napa, CA. This year's theme, Our Mission: Prioritizing Patients, will inspire thought-provoking discussions on keeping patients at the heart of health care. Get ready for engaging sessions, network with public health care leaders and discover innovative strategies for improving quality of care in our communities.

Don't wait! — [Reserve](#) at our special group rate of \$287.10 per night. The booking cut-off date is November 1, but rooms are going fast, and availability isn't guaranteed so be sure to book soon!

We are thrilled to give you a sneak peek of our impressive lineup of speakers and panels, all focused on our shared mission to prioritize patients. Stay tuned for more exciting updates on our [website](#) — Lots more to come!

CAPH | 70 Washington Street, Suite 215 | Oakland, CA 94607 US

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