

**November 21, 2025 - President's Message**

I am back from a wonderful sabbatical that was focused on spending time with my family. Knowing that our teenage daughters will soon leave us empty nesters, I savored extra time with both of them – even when they were being... teenagers!

I want to express my deep gratitude to Katie Rodriguez for ably serving as Interim President and CEO in my absence. Many of you got to know Katie better over these two months and have shared with me how steady and insightful she is—two important leadership qualities for these uncertain and challenging times.

In just two weeks, Katie and I, along with the CAPH/SNI team, will be welcoming you to San Diego for our annual conference. Many of you know this is one of the few times our full community comes together. It's a chance to exchange ideas, hear from compelling speakers, celebrate your innovative work, and enjoy a little friendly competition on the dance floor. For those attending for the first time, we're glad you'll be part of it.

In the meantime, wishing you and your families a happy Thanksgiving. We all have much to be grateful for, I especially for you.

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

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**State****Capitol Power Shift: Historic Senate Leadership Change and Crowded Governor's Race Set Stage for 2026**

Senator Monique Limón took the oath of office on Nov. 17, 2025, becoming California's 50th Senate President pro tempore and the first Latina and first woman of color to lead the upper house. She succeeds Senator Mike McGuire, who has served in the role since February 2024.

Limón's progressive credentials and anticipated committee leadership changes could reshape health care policy debates in Sacramento. First elected to the Assembly in 2016, she has championed consumer protections in health care, environmental regulation, and economic equity. Her elevation signals potential shifts in Budget, Appropriations, and Health committee leadership, which are critical to public health care systems' funding and Medi-Cal policy decisions.

California voters approved Proposition 50 on Nov. 4, 2025, by approximately 64%, temporarily shifting control of congressional redistricting from the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to the State Legislature through 2030. This redistricting change could influence whether some legislators pursue federal office rather than remain in Sacramento, limiting Limón's choices for top leadership positions.

Meanwhile, California's 2026 governor's race remains wide open. The most recent [UC](#)

[Berkeley IGS poll](#) shows Republican Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco leading with 13% support, followed by Democratic former Rep. Katie Porter at 11%. However, 44% of voters remain undecided.

With this level of uncertainty, the Democratic field continues to expand. Both Billionaire philanthropist Tom Steyer and East Bay Rep. Eric Swalwell announced their candidacies this week. Other declared candidates include former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, and former California State Controller Betty Yee.

These developments underscore a Capitol in transition. As CAPH prepares for the 2026 legislative session beginning Jan. 5, both the new Senate leadership structure and the campaign dynamics ahead will influence our advocacy priorities.

### **Future of Medi-Cal Commission Launches**

The Future of Medi-Cal Commission, announced on Nov. 20, has been established to develop a modernization roadmap for California's Medicaid program amid anticipated federal funding cuts and state budget pressures. The 29-member commission, which is co-chaired by former Newsom administration officials Mark Ghaly and Ann O'Leary, will bring together leaders from health plans, labor, counties, hospitals, and former state and federal Medicaid officials. The commission includes two representatives from public health care systems—Jen Cruikshank, CEO at RUHS and David Rubin, Executive Vice President at UC Health. The commission will examine financing options, more efficient delivery models, and improvements to behavioral health services, with recommendations expected in early 2027.

The commission is funded by the California Health Care Foundation, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, and the SCAN Foundation. [Learn more about the commission.](#)

### **County Indigent Care Resources Developed by State Associations**

Recent policy changes enacted under H.R. 1 are expected to significantly reduce Medicaid enrollment in California. As a result, policymakers, advocates, and media outlets have begun inquiring about county medically indigent programs—specifically how counties are preparing for an increase in the uninsured population and what county requirements entail.

To assist counties in responding to these inquiries, CAPH, along with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), and County Medical Services Program (CMSP), have collaborated to develop the following resources:

[County Indigent Care Fact Sheet](#) Provides a clear overview of Section 17000 requirements, outlining what they do and do not include.

[External Talking Points](#) For internal use only (not for public distribution). These talking points can help guide conversations with external stakeholders, including policymakers, advocates, and media representatives.

We encourage members to review these documents to support internal planning and county communication efforts.

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## **Federal**

### **The Road Ahead in Washington, D.C.**

The longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history ended on Nov. 12, 2025, after lasting 43 days. Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR) extending federal government funding through Jan. 30, 2026, providing temporary relief, but leaving several critical healthcare policy issues unresolved.

The CR includes a retroactive delay of DSH cuts; an extension of Medicare telehealth

flexibilities; restoration of SNAP benefits; restoration of pay for furloughed federal workers; and rescission of shutdown layoffs for federal workers.

The CR did not extend enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies, which are set to expire at the end of December 2025. Senate Republicans committed to a vote by mid-Dec. on extending the subsidies, but House Speaker Mike Johnson has not committed to holding a vote. Without extension, [ACA marketplace premiums](#) are estimated to more than double for some individuals, potentially leaving millions without affordable coverage. This could lead to more uninsured patients at public health care systems.

### **Department of Homeland Security Proposes New Public Charge Rule**

On Nov. 19, the federal government published a notice of proposed rulemaking on [public charge determinations](#). The proposed rule would rescind or remove many of the regulatory provisions from the Biden-era public charge rule, which limits the consideration of receipt of public benefits to cash assistance and long-term institutionalization at government expense in public charge assessments. If finalized, the administration indicates forthcoming policy guidance will consider current or past use of any means-tested public benefits in assessing the likelihood of dependence on the government and therefore in determining whether a noncitizen is a public charge.

Additional details on the proposal and how it compares to current policy can be found in this [quick guide](#) prepared by the Protecting Immigrant Families coalition. It is important to note that the “public charge inadmissibility test” affects individuals who are applying for green cards or admission to the United States, and many people may be exempt from the test. The rule, however, may discourage some individuals from seeking services for which they remain eligible.

CAPH is reviewing the proposal in more detail and is coordinating with partners across the health care, social services/supports, and the immigrants' rights space to understand expected impacts and assess next steps. The public comment period on the proposed rule runs through Dec. 19, 2025, and no changes take effect until the rule is finalized.

### **CMS Directs Providers to Submit Held Telehealth Claims and Releases Updated FAQs**

Recent federal funding legislation included a short-term extension of key telehealth flexibilities through Jan. 30, 2026, and retroactively restored those flexibilities during the government shutdown. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is [directing telehealth providers](#) to retroactively submit claims held during the shutdown and continue submitting claims as usual through Jan. 30, 2026, when pandemic-era flexibilities are now set to expire unless Congress acts.

CMS is also encouraging providers to identify which beneficiaries were charged for telehealth services with dates of service on or after Oct. 1, 2025, that are retroactively payable and instead submit applicable claims to Medicare, refunding any overpayment to beneficiaries. CMS also released [updated FAQ's](#) reflecting current law.

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## **Resources**

### **Managing Up, Down, and Sideways in a Multi-Generational Team**

Free 1-hour workshop on leading across generations. Dec 10, noon PT. [Register here.](#)

### **Human. Being. Leader.**

Eight-week mindful leadership course taught by Hunter Gatewood and Rebecca Bromberg starting in January 2026. [Learn more here.](#)

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