

October 24, 2025 - President's Message

Dear Public Health Care System Leaders,

As the federal government shutdown enters its fourth week with no resolution in sight, uncertainty in Washington continues. While not the focus of the strife in Washington, DC, we must collectively continue to remind our congressional members to retroactively reverse the DSH payment reductions and extend the Medicare telehealth flexibilities to protect stability for our systems and patients. CAPH continues to remind our congressional delegation of the importance of not losing sight of this when a Continuing Resolution (CR) is passed. Thanks to each of you for also ensuring our Members of Congress hear this message.

While the debate in Congress remains far from home, its impacts are increasingly local. The ongoing shutdown is beginning to strain essential safety-net services, with others at risk if it continues. Federal government payments for food stamps (CalFresh in California) are being delayed for the month of November, which means millions of people across the country will not receive food stamps. California has allocated \$80 million to support food banks and deployed the California National Guard to assist with food distribution. CalWORKs (California's Welfare program) payments will be distributed for November, but the state has warned that December benefits could be delayed if the shutdown continues.

As these challenges unfold locally, attention is also turning to the decisions California voters will face in the upcoming election on November 4. Proposition 50 would temporarily adjust California's congressional district maps in response to partisan redistricting efforts seen in several other states including Texas, Virginia and North Carolina. The outcome of Prop. 50 and efforts in other states could help shift control of Congress in the November 2026 elections. If that happens, a Democratic Congress could serve as a check on President Trump and his agenda. Locally, Santa Clara County voters will consider Measure A, a temporary 0.625% sales tax increase projected to generate roughly \$330 million annually; revenue that could help offset the impact of HR 1-related cuts and sustain vital county services. The outcomes of both will inform how we approach future policy and advocacy efforts.

Your leadership continues to guide our systems through uncertainty. Together, we will continue to meet each challenge with the same commitment and resolve that defines California's public health care systems.

Sincerely,

Katie Rodriguez
Interim President & CEO
California Association of Public Hospitals & Health Systems

State**Medicare Open Enrollment and Medi-Medi Plans**

Medicare open enrollment runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. During this period, eligible individuals can enroll in [Medi-Medi plans](#), which combine Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits under one coordinated plan.

Starting in 2026, Medi-Medi plans will be offered in 41 counties: nine new plans will launch,

and three existing plans will expand to serve up to 461,000 members. For more information, visit the DHCS Medi-Medi Plan [webpage](#).

Federal Update on the Federal Government Shutdown

As we enter day 24 of the shutdown, the absence of bipartisan negotiations marks a noticeable departure from previous shutdowns. House Speaker Mike Johnson continues to claim the House will remain adjourned until the Senate can act on a government spending bill. In the Senate, the impasse deepened as Democrats blocked a Republican funding proposal to pay military personnel and government workers this week. The vote, which forced Democrats to oppose government worker compensation, underscored the widening gulf between the parties.

Despite this political gamesmanship, some Republican congressional representatives are beginning to recognize the political risks as their constituents face rising ACA premiums, the loss of SNAP and food assistance benefits, and mounting pressure from federal employee unions seeking to prevent federal layoffs.

In addition to the direct effects of the shutdown, several other major programs and policies have their authorizations tied to the federal government's spending bills.

CAPH continues its advocacy during this critical period and will keep members informed as the shutdown continues.

CMS Medicare Telehealth Updates

In anticipation of Congressional action to extend the Medicare telehealth flexibilities, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is holding, rather than denying, claims for Medicare telehealth services provided after Oct. 1. CMS encourages providers who choose to continue providing telehealth services that may not be payable to consider issuing an [Advance Beneficiary Notice of Noncoverage](#) to patients.

CMS also released updated [frequently asked questions](#) indicating that federally qualified health centers can continue billing for non-behavioral telehealth services delivered through telecommunications technology by reporting HCPCS code G2025 on claims, consistent with a policy finalized in the [2025 Physician Fee Schedule](#).

It remains unclear whether a patient's home qualifies as an eligible location for these services. Because CMS is not classifying these services as "telehealth", the flexibility likely remains in place. CAPH continues gathering additional information about this policy and will share updates as they become available.

Resources

CAPH/SNI 2025 Annual Conference: Early Bird Pricing Ends Today

[Register now](#) to join us Dec. 3 - 5 in San Diego at the [Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter](#).

This year's theme, *Anchors of Care Amidst Waves of Change*, honors the resilience and leadership of California's public health care systems as they navigate uncertainty, advance equity, and stay true to their mission to serve.

Expect powerful keynotes, thoughtful breakout sessions, and meaningful connections with peers from across the state.

[Reserve your room](#) by November 7 and stay tuned for more details—we look forward to seeing you there!

Groups of 4 or more receive a 10% discount when registering together under a single invoice.

Upcoming DHCS Webinar: The Fierce Urgency for Community Partnerships

The Department of Health Care Services will host a webinar:

“The Fierce Urgency for Community Partnerships”

Oct. 30, 2025 | noon to 1:30 p.m.

DHCS Director Michelle Baass will open the session, which will explore how California is improving health outcomes by partnering across sectors and centering community voices. DHCS and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) will share updates on efforts to strengthen community engagement, accountability, and transparency across public health, managed care, and behavioral health. [Register here.](#)

Health4All Webinar Series: Preparing for Medi-Cal Changes

The California Immigrant Policy Center and Health Access California, co-sponsors of Health4All, are hosting a webinar on upcoming Medi-Cal changes taking effect soon.

Webinar Schedule:

Friday, Nov. 14 | 10–11:30 a.m.

Medi-Cal Enrollment & Community Outreach

Learn about the upcoming Medi-Cal enrollment freeze, how it affects immigrant communities/its impact on communities affected by coverage transitions, and effective outreach strategies to encourage timely enrollment before the Dec. 31 deadline.

Spanish interpretation available.

[Register here.](#)

Thursday, Nov. 20 | 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Policy Changes & Data Privacy

Learn how HR 1 and Medi-Cal eligibility changes could affect access to care for Californians impacted by coverage transitions. The session will also address data-sharing concerns between CMS and DHS and offer messaging tips to build community trust.

[Register here.](#)

Thursday, Dec. 11 | 1–2:30 p.m.

Protecting Immigrant Health Access

Join a panel discussion on how legislators, local governments and agencies can work together to close coverage gaps following the Medi-Cal enrollment freeze and other upcoming changes. The discussion will reflect on California’s past efforts to serve uninsured immigrants and highlight new approaches to strengthening safety-net systems moving forward.

[Register here.](#)

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