

Maternal and Child Health Access



Where?

ONLINE!



**MCHA Monthly Meeting
Thursday, May 15, 2025
10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

(After you register, look for
the Zoom link in your
registration confirmation
email)

Speaker/Topic:

**Lucy Quacinella
The May Revise - the Governor's
State Budget Proposal**

Updates on Health Coverage



**Asian Heritage Month; Maternal Mental Health and Mental Health
Awareness Month; CalFresh Awareness Month
Belated Happy Mother's Day!**

ANNOUNCEMENT!

On behalf of the Maternal and Child Health Access Board of Directors and me, Lynn Kersey, please join me in congratulating our new Executive Director, Celia Valdez. We are excited she has accepted! Celia is a near 30-year veteran of MCHA, where she helped develop the data tracking for the Community Health Outreach Initiative under the LAC Department of Public Health, led the growth and stellar reputation of our Health Navigation division and directed MCHA's site at The Wellness Center at County Hospital. She has appeared on numerous policy panels and has been quoted extensively for articles addressing access to health coverage and care. In 2002, she assisted with community-based research exploring barriers to access and the role of health navigators in [Community-Based Health Care Navigation's Impact on Access to Primary Care for Low-Income Latinos](#) in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine.

Celia is deeply committed to the work, staff, and clients of MCHA, and we look forward to a smooth transition and the work ahead. We are still working out the timing but believe she will start July 1 in her new position

From our April 17 meeting:

www.mchaccess.org/meetings.htm

Joceline Hernandez, MS, RD, IBCLC, Nutrition & Physical Activity (NUPA) Coordinator, Perinatal Programs Section - MCAH Division, CA Dept of Public Health

"CDPH/MCAH Nutrition & Physical Activity (NUPA) Initiative: Tools & Resources"

Ms. Hernandez wears quite a number of hats very well! She runs a state program as the Coordinator of The Nutrition and Physical Activity (NUPA) Program in the Perinatal Programs section of MCAH. Although that's a state program, Ms. Hernandez is based in Los Angeles and knows the landscape for LA as well. Ms. Hernandez walked us through her program's websites and links from the websites: cdph.ca.gov/NUPA | cdph.ca.gov/Breastfeeding | go.cdph.ca.gov/diabetes-and-pregnancy.

We spent time on gestational diabetes and postpartum care; the "Sweet Success" program is no longer offered, but the state has created a Diabetes Prevention Program as a Medi-Cal benefit.

Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (also known as GDM or gestational diabetes) is a type of diabetes that develops during pregnancy. In gestational diabetes, blood sugar rises because of pregnancy-related hormonal changes and usually develops around 24 weeks but may occur earlier in pregnancy. In most cases, blood sugar levels can be controlled with diet and exercise, but some people may need oral medication or insulin. Pregnant women who are Black, Native American/Alaska Native, Hispanic, Asian American, and Pacific Islander are at a higher risk for developing gestational diabetes. Other risk factors include family history, physical inactivity, and maternal age. Most people with gestational diabetes return to normal blood sugar levels after delivery. Individuals who begin pregnancy above a healthy weight are more likely to develop gestational diabetes. **The number of pregnant individuals affected by gestational diabetes has been increasing in recent years.**

If you are currently pregnant and diagnosed with gestational diabetes, please check out the [Information for Pregnant Individuals with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus webpage](#).

Connected to diabetes, we also spent some time on [Healthy Eating as a Family](#) and [MyPlate](#) - with individual resources for pregnancy, people with gestational diabetes and other populations. Steve Nish, of LA's Best Babies, thanked Ms. Hernandez for reviewing the Welcome Baby book's MyPlate and nutritional info a few years ago!

Their entire book is here: <http://LABestBabies.org/book> And in

Spanish: <http://LABestBabies.org/libro>

Ms. Hernandez also spent time on breastfeeding and mentioned the [state requirement of all birthing hospitals to be "Baby Friendly"](#). This involves 10 steps to support breastfeeding. Unfortunately, there is no monitoring or penalties for non-compliance, but MCHA says, "Ask your hospital"!

No Cuts to Medicaid – Hands Off Medicaid!

The House Energy and Commerce Committee is currently meeting to markup its part of the reconciliation bill. It is critical that members of Congress continue to hear a simple message from their constituents: *no cuts to Medicaid and critical health care programs*.

You can read Families USA's statement on the E&C bill [here](#), along with a [section by section breakdown](#) of the specific ways this bill will harm Americans, including LGBTQ+ communities and immigrants.

As this legislation advances, we'll need to keep up the pressure. Here are 3 ways you can make your voice heard:

1. Call and Email Congress
 2. 866-426-2631
 3. Send an email using [Families USA's email writing tool](#)
4. Join Our Days of Action
 5. Mark your calendar for May 14, and May 19! You can find more info on our [Defending Medicaid Days of Action](#) landing page
6. Use social media
 7. #HandsOffMedicaid
 8. [Social Toolkit for Medicaid Defense](#)

From the National Health Law Program (NHeLP): At Least 715 Billion Dollars in Medicaid Cuts, Over 13.7 million People to Lose Coverage

House GOP Proposes Medicaid Work Requirements, other Cuts to Pay for Trump's Corporate Tax Giveaways

Washington, D.C. – The National Health Law Program (NHeLP) strongly condemns the House Republican proposal that would slash at least \$715 billion from Medicaid over the next decade and cause 13.7 million people to lose coverage, according to analysis from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The bill, released late last night by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, advances massive funding cuts, harmful eligibility restrictions, and ideologically driven attacks on reproductive and immigrant

health to fund President Trump's agenda of tax giveaways for corporations and a massive expansion of militarized immigration enforcement.

The bill aims to cut Medicaid spending and coverage via harmful Medicaid work requirements, which would force low-income adults to prove they work 80 hours per month to keep Medicaid. The Congressional proposal is even more extreme than what Arkansas implemented in 2018 when 18,000 people lost coverage in months.

"The proposed legislation represents the most serious threat to Medicaid in its history. This bill acts as a backdoor repeal of Medicaid expansion. It punishes people for losing a job, blocks them from Affordable Care Act (ACA) coverage, and strips away health care in the harshest, most punitive way yet." said [Mara Youdelman](#), Managing Director of Federal Advocacy. "We know that Medicaid work requirements do not work and that they are cuts by another name. Work requirements do not lead to higher employment and often exacerbate conditions that keep people out of the workforce. Further, by coupling work requirements with high cost-sharing and more frequent eligibility checks, Republicans' proposal undermines the Affordable Care Act's historic expansion of coverage for those who had been previously shut out. These policies are intended to terminate coverage for millions of people."

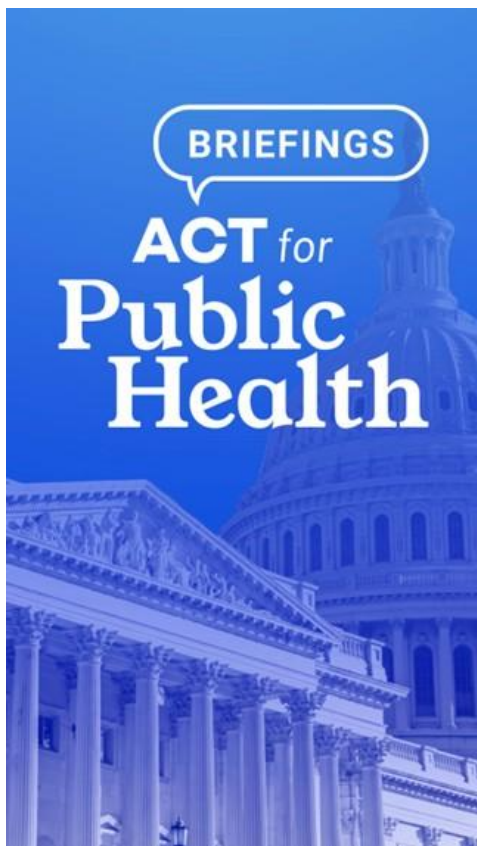
"These are not just budget cuts. They are cruel policy choices meant to score political points by scapegoating the most underserved among us," said [Elizabeth G. Taylor](#), Executive Director of NHeLP. "It strips millions of people of life-saving coverage while making significant Medicaid cuts to states that use non-federal funding to provide care to immigrant children, and others who don't qualify for help, banning gender-affirming care, and blocking Medicaid funding from trusted providers like Planned Parenthood."

The legislation also ramps up red tape across Medicaid by allowing states to increase the frequency of eligibility checks and terminate coverage for people who fail to respond quickly. These changes are projected to push millions of people off the program, including older adults and people with disabilities. The bill would also restrict retroactive eligibility—which protects eligible people by covering medical costs up to 90 days before enrollment—which will dramatically increase the medical debt of low-income individuals. At the same time, it raises out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries, imposing \$35 copays for medical services on people living just above the poverty line.

"This bill is a cruel attempt to unravel decades of progress in expanding access to care," Taylor added.

NHeLP urges Congress to reject this dangerous legislation and protect the Medicaid program that millions of individuals and families depend on.

[READ STATEMENT](#)



Public health practitioners and policymakers need to stay informed amid the shifting legal landscape brought about by recent federal activities, including proposed Medicaid cuts. The Act for Public Health partners are hosting a new forum for timely conversations that explain and interpret the impact of federal action on state and local public health practice. These 30 minute informal discussions will take place on May 14 to July 9 between speakers with topical expertise. They will cover federal actions on subject areas such as immigration; LGBTQ+ communities; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives; and more. These webinars are for public health professionals at the state and local level, nonprofit organizations, academics, researchers, attorneys, and those with a stake in federal actions affecting public health.

[Register](#)

Need for Syphilis Screening During Pregnancy Reaffirmed

The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) this week published an [“**Online First**” forum dedicated to maternal syphilis](#) and the recent reaffirmation of the US Preventive Services Task Force for universal screening during pregnancy.

Often dismissed as a deadly and dreaded disease of the past, syphilis has made a forceful and frightening comeback in the US.¹ In particular, the recent dramatic increase in syphilis among pregnant women is an urgent public health concern. Between 2016 and 2022, according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of maternal syphilis more than tripled in the US.² In addition, this population-level data source revealed that 47 states have reported recent increases in their maternal syphilis rates. This finding underscores the breadth of this unfolding public health crisis. Predictably and worryingly, the rate of increase was steepest among mothers lacking access to prenatal care. Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*.

[Here is the patient page](#) – graphics and handouts for patients on syphilis during pregnancy

SUN Bucks Summer Food Program Renewed For Kids in 2025

California’s Summer EBT program, [known as SUN Bucks](#), is returning in 2025. This food program provides families \$40 per month for food in June, July, and August (\$120 total) when children do not have access to school meals.

Most children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals through a school meal application or Universal Benefits Application, or get CalFresh, CalWORKs, and/or Medi-Cal, are automatically enrolled. Children in foster care, experiencing homelessness, attending Head Start, and/or are considered a runaway are also categorically eligible and are automatically enrolled. Some children may need to sign up. Participating in SUN Bucks does not affect a family's immigration status. [Visit our FAQs page for more information.](#)

MCAH Data Dashboard Updates

MCAH has the following updates for the division's [data dashboards](#):

- [Child Mortality](#) – Updated with 2023 data
- [Maternal Health Conditions](#) – Updated with 2023 data
- [Newborn Screening Conditions](#) (in collaboration with Newborn Screening Program)– Updated with 2023 data
- [Pregnancy Weight](#) – Updated with 2023 data and new expanded race/ethnicity category (race alone or in combination with another racial or ethnic group)
- [Preterm Birth](#) – Updated with 2023 data and new expanded race/ethnicity category (race alone or in combination with another racial or ethnic group)
- [Youth Suicide Deaths](#) – Updated with 2023 data

Public Health and Frontline Doulas Celebrate the Launch of the Los Angeles County Medi-Cal Doula Hub

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is proud to announce the launch of the Los Angeles County Medi-Cal Doula Hub. The Doula Hub is a collaborative effort between Public Health and lead community agency, [Frontline Doulas](#) in partnership with [Diversity Uplifts, Inc.](#)

In a landmark move to transform perinatal care and address long-standing perinatal health disparities, The Doula Hub will support the rollout of the [Medi-Cal Doula Benefit](#) by working collaboratively with birth workers, Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans, community partners, and Medi-Cal beneficiaries through a strategic community-centered approach to provide workforce development for doulas and public education to county residents about the positive impacts of doula care.

The Doula Hub's mission is to educate, connect, and advocate for doulas, families and communities, so that any Medi-Cal beneficiary who desires the affirming support of full spectrum doula care will be able to receive it, and doulas interested in becoming Medi-Cal providers are able to navigate the process successfully.

[READ MORE HERE:](#)

Research participation – Cerebral Palsy

Dr. Kevin Mintz, a research scholar at the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics (SCBE), is looking for people to participate in a research study regarding the perspectives

of different groups on the potential benefits and harms of precision medicine research on cerebral palsy (PMR-CP). PMR-CP, broadly speaking, refers to studies exploring potential genetic factors contributing to a CP diagnosis.

An interview will be conducted (approximately 60 to 110 minutes long) over Zoom with researchers conducting PMR-CP, CP community members, and clinicians specializing in the care of patients with CP. You will be asked questions about how you perceive the potential benefits and potential harms of PMR-CP and why. You will also be asked to reflect on the priorities you think should drive PMR-CP in the future. There are minimal risks to your participation in this study and you will be given a \$50 gift card for your time and participation.

Any English-speaking adult with CP, aged 18 or over, who is able to participate in an interview over Zoom, or English-speaking primary caregiver of someone with CP who is incapable of participating in an interview over Zoom, is eligible to participate.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact Kevin Mintz, PhD via email at kmintz@stanford.edu You will then be contacted and sent a secure message with a link to a survey to screen you for eligibility.

For participant's rights questions, contact 1-866-680-2906.

[Charles R. Drew University's College of Medicine Featured in PBS NOVA Documentary on Black Health in America | Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science](#)

The film, directed by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Stanley Nelson, premiered nationally on PBS and [is now available for streaming](#) and on the PBS app.

CDU's College of Medicine is highlighted in the film as part of the solution to health inequities—ushering in a new generation of doctors who are not only skilled clinicians, but also equipped to confront bias and understand the broader social and environmental conditions impacting health outcomes.

EBT Pilot Program asks cardholders to reset PINs

Here is information about a pilot the state is running in case get questions from your community members. There are a lot of scams out there, so it's important to know what's legitimate!

The state started a pilot in February. They are identifying EBT cards that may have been compromised and **requiring cardholders to reset their PINs in order to protect their benefits from skimming/theft**. The state is sharing the list of customers with the counties.

Cardholders whose PINs have been reset get a **text message from CDSS telling them to reset their PIN**. PINs can be reset through the EBT hotline (877-328-9677), ebtEDGE app, in-person at the county, and at limited POS terminals. The state reported that 98% of attempts to reset PINs were successful on the first try.

The state resets the PINs at the end of the month before the next month's benefits are loaded on the EBT cards. This month **impacted customers should have gotten/will get a text message in the last couple of days or today.**

CDSS is planning to continue the pilot through June but they're open to extending it, if needed.

In addition, CDSS reported that all of the new chip/tap EBT cards have been mailed out to all customers.

Recall of certain baby food sold at Target

The FDA is issuing a recall for Target Good & Gather Pea, Zucchini, Kale & Thyme Vegetable Puree baby food because it can be contaminated with lead and in violation of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health effects. This product was distributed in Target stores and recalled by Fruselva USA on March 12, 2025. The recall applies only to lot numbers 4169 and 4167 with best by dates of December 7 and December 9, 2025. The product is in 4oz packages labeled 6+ months. More information about this recall is available on the [United States Food and Drug Administration Enforcement Report Database](#). Please see product image to the right.

We encourage you to share this information with your networks and clients. Click [here](#) to download the recall communications flyer.

Additionally, we encourage consumers and healthcare providers to:

Immediately stop using the recalled product and return to a Target store for a full refund. Consumers with questions can contact Target Guest Relations at 1-800-440-0680

Test children for lead exposure if children used this product

Save The Date:

Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 2-4 PM - Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) Medi-Cal Dental Services Division (MDS) Medi-Cal Dental Los Angeles Stakeholder Meeting.

DHCS will share updates and information on new and upcoming activities. Additionally, this meeting provides dental stakeholders with a forum to share input with the Medi-Cal Dental team that can help improve the delivery of oral health care services.

The meeting information will be posted on the [Dental Los Angeles Stakeholder Meetings \(ca.gov\)](#). Any additional materials will be posted on the webpage prior to the meeting or as soon as they become available.

Please email your questions to dental@dhcs.ca.gov.

Thursday, May 22, 10-11:30 AM - "Access to Reproductive Health: Abortion and Family Planning" MCHA Training with Liz Ramirez! Registration on our website or [HERE](#).

Thursday, May 29, 6 PM Panel discussion, reception to follow - Legal Solutions for Maternal Health Challenges. Co-sponsored by UCLA Center on Reproductive Health, Law and Policy, UCLA Critical Race Studies and Center for Reproductive Rights

From obstetrical violence to systemic inequities in care and restrictions on where and how people can give birth, there is no clear and certain body of constitutional protections for people who face challenges during pregnancy and birth. This is made worse by the recent loss of federal constitutional rights, increased criminalization of pregnancy care, and shrinking of reproductive health care options. The conversation, moderated by award-winning journalist Nina Martin, will feature scholars, practitioners, and advocates to discuss real-world litigation, current challenges in applying the law, and the pathway to new legal innovations for maternal health. This is a unique opportunity to explore how law can be an innovative tool for justice in the fight for better maternal care for all. RSVP here, space is limited: <https://bit.ly/RSVPMaternalHealth>. We hope to see you there!

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Please click on the job title you are interested in to view the full job description and the application process. And provide a cover letter and current resume with your application that specifically outlines your employment history experience and educational background for which you're applying.

MCHA is an Equal Opportunity Employer; women and people of color are strongly encouraged to apply.

- [Welcome Baby Registered Nurse - Bilingual in English/Spanish](#)

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