

Maternal and Child Health Access



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Where?

ONLINE!



**Thursday, May 21, 2026
10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

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

Speakers:

Cassie Manjikian, from California Perinatal Wellness Alliance

&

Katherine Heck, MIHA (Maternal Infant Health Assessment), CA Department of Public Health

Topic:

Maternal Mental Health and findings and recommendations from the Maternal and Infant Health Assessment intended to guide clinicians, programs, and policymakers to more effectively support Californians with a recent birth.

Plus

Benefits Updates from MCHA staff



Minutes from our April 16, 2026 meeting:

www.mchaccess.org/meetings.htm

**Guests: Ruth Rivera and Valerie Beltran East LA Women's Center
Sexual Assault Services and Policy Updates**

&

MCHA's Marcela Marquez and Liz Ramirez, CalFresh & Medi-Cal Updates

Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) featured a presentation by Ruth Rivera and Valerie Beltran from the East Los Angeles Women's Center about sexual assault awareness and services. The presenters discussed statistics on sexual violence, shared information about the East LA Women's Center's services including their 50-year-old rape crisis hotline and explained the Survivor Bill of Rights and recent legislation affecting survivors. Following the presentation, Liz Ramirez and Marcela Marquez provided updates on Medi-Cal changes, including the elimination of preventive dental benefits for certain populations over 19, new verification requirements for California residency, and the implementation of work requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) under HR1 legislation.

Sexual Violence Statistics and Support

Ruth and Valerie from East Los Angeles Women's Center presented on sexual violence awareness during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. They defined sexual violence broadly to include not just physical assault but also stalking, harassment, and other non-physical forms of abuse. The presenters discussed contributing factors including cultural norms, social media, and the impact of powerful individuals perpetuating harmful behavior. They emphasized that while progress has been made over the organization's 50-year history, the need for services remains strong in the community.

Valerie presented statistics on sexual violence, highlighting that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men experienced sexual violence involving physical contact, with child sexual abuse affecting 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys. She emphasized that 91% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone known to the child, often in familiar environments like home, work, or school. Valerie outlined key

principles for supporting sexual assault survivors, including creating a safe environment, building trust, offering choices, collaborating on resources, and empowering the survivor to guide the conversation and healing process.

East LA Women's Center Services

The meeting also focused on the services provided by the East Los Angeles Women's Center for sexual assault survivors. Valerie and Ruth explained that all services are free, bilingual, and available 24/7, including a hotline, website chat, and hospital accompaniments. They clarified that while the center primarily serves LA County, particularly East LA and Boyle Heights, they can provide crisis support and referrals for survivors outside their jurisdiction. Their services include youth programming, support for industrial workers, services for human trafficking and domestic violence survivors, and HIV/AIDS navigation support. Ruth and Valerie explained the Survivor Bill of Rights, highlighting key protections for survivors, such as access to advocates during legal processes and the collection of evidence within specific timeframes. The discussion also covered their services for male survivors, including a men's healing circle and fatherhood program, as well as family services to support loved ones affected by trauma.

Sexual Assault Support and Legislation

Ruth discussed various aspects of sexual assault support and legislation. She explained that law enforcement doesn't always need to be involved in SART cases and mentioned that Santa Monica Rape Crisis Center can provide services without law enforcement involvement. Ruth highlighted two recently enacted laws: AB 250, which created a two-year window for reporting sexual assault, and AB 258, which strengthens protections against spousal rape for people with disabilities. She also discussed the importance of the VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) funding, which requires annual advocacy efforts to maintain, and shared statistics on the financial cost of sexual assault in California. Ruth concluded by introducing the Red Lips HOOPS On campaign, which aims to reclaim cultural symbols like red lipstick and large hoop earrings as empowering rather than provocative and outlined various ways individuals can support survivors and raise awareness.

Happy 30th Anniversary to MCHA

Liz provided a historical overview of MCHA, highlighting its evolution from its founding in 1996 to its current role in providing comprehensive health and social services, including the development of the mail-in Medi-Cal application and the creation of the Welcome Baby program.

THE GOOD THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Medi-Cal Policy Updates and Changes

Liz provided updates on several Medi-Cal policy changes, including the enrollment freeze that began January 1st, 2026, which impacts pregnancy reporting requirements and the loss of preventive dental benefits for two target populations (undocumented individuals and those with non-immigrant visas over age 19). She explained the distinction between full-scope Medi-Cal and restricted Medi-Cal coverage, noting that while the latter will no longer cover preventive dental services, it will continue to provide emergency care, long-term care, dialysis, and pregnancy coverage. The presentation also covered changes to California residency verification processes and the reinstatement of medical support enforcement requirements during the COVID unwinding period.

CalFresh Eligibility Changes Presentation

Marcela presented on HR1 changes to CalFresh eligibility, explaining that certain populations including asylees, refugees, and crime victims with T, U, and VAWA visas will lose benefits starting April 1st during renewals. She detailed new Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABOD) requirements for individuals aged 18-64, requiring 80 combined work hours monthly, with exemptions for disabled individuals, foster youth, veterans, and the homeless. The presentation also covered changes to the standard utility allowance, which will now provide an additional \$20.01 in cash benefits to eligible recipients. Multiple participants requested access to presentation materials and charts showing eligible immigration statuses, which Liz confirmed would be shared via email and posted on the website with monthly meeting materials.

*Please visit our website for a copy of Liz and Marcela's Presentation

Materials This Month

CA May Revise

For a Copy of Governor's May revise visit this link: [California Budget](#)

[Western Center response to May Revision](#) - Release

"California Cannot Balance Its Budget on Hunger, Poverty, and Immigrant Exclusion"

Western Center on Law & Poverty released a response to Governor Gavin Newsom's 2026–2027 May Revision budget proposal, criticizing the administration's failure to protect Californians from devastating federal cuts and calling on legislators to reject a budget that accepts hunger, instability, and deepening poverty as inevitable for hundreds of thousands of Californians.

Measure ER

Measure ER is a Los Angeles County ballot measure that will appear on the June 2, 2026 election ballot. The motion to place the ballot measure before voters was introduced by Supervisors Holly J. Mitchell, Second District, and Hilda L. Solis, First District. On February 10, 2026, the Board of Supervisors approved the ballot measure to go before voters in response to H.R. 1 (One Big Beautiful Bill Act) and anticipated federal funding cuts affecting the County's healthcare system.

Factsheet link: [measure-er-faq-for-partners.pdf](#)

Golden State Start – Free Diapers to Newborns

San Francisco Chronicle article by Catherine Ho

[California to provide hundreds of free diapers to all newborns](#)

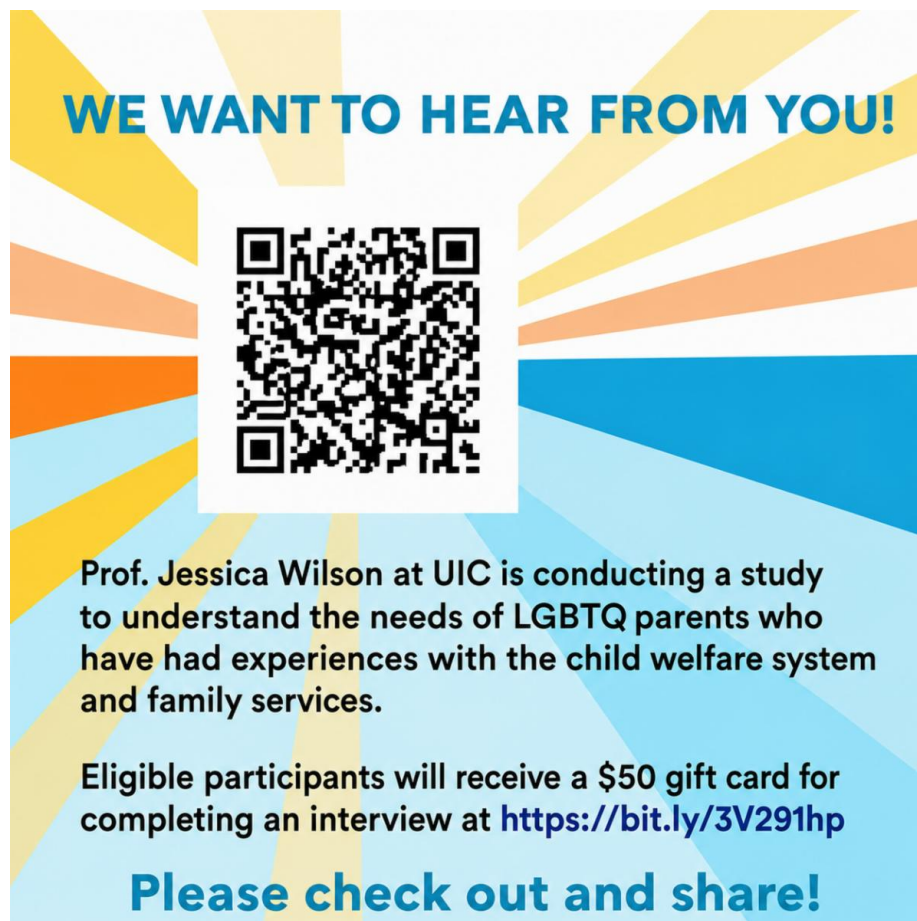
This is GOOD NEWS: This new Diaper benefit will start with the hospitals serving the largest number of Medi-Cal patients, so that helps target distribution to the families that really need this support, approximately 65-70 hospitals, but hospitals must agree to participate. Estimates

suggest that families spend \$1,000 a year on diapers, so this program seems meaningful in helping with affordability. There was a bill last year that would have made baby diapers a Medi-Cal benefit, but it failed; on the CalWORKs side, though, the cost of diapers was added in 2017 as part of the monthly cash benefit.


Research Study on LGBTQ Parent Experiences

The UCLA Family Services Project is conducting a statewide research study on LGBTQ parents' experiences interacting with child welfare or family services related to their children.

Eligible parents receive a \$50 gift card for completing an interview with a member of our research team. We conduct interviews via video or in-person, depending on the participant's preference.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Prof. Jessica Wilson at UIC is conducting a study to understand the needs of LGBTQ parents who have had experiences with the child welfare system and family services.

Eligible participants will receive a \$50 gift card for completing an interview at <https://bit.ly/3V291hp>

Please check out and share!

Medi-Cal Housing Supports

The National Health Law Program (NHeLP) recently published [FAQs on Medi-Cal Housing Supports for Transition-Age Youth and Former Foster Youth](#).

Medi-Cal managed care plans cover several housing supports for transition-age youth (TAY) and former foster youth (FFY) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These Community Supports can help youth find and apply for housing, pay for security deposits and other set-up fees, and maintain their housing. As of January 1, 2026, plans must also offer up to six months of rental payments to eligible members (Transitional Rent). This resource answers

some frequently asked questions about Medi-Cal housing supports as they apply to TAY and FFY, building upon our [Factsheet on Medi-Cal Housing Supports](#) and more in-depth [Issue Brief on Transitional Rent](#).

State of the Air Report

The American Lung Association released its 27th annual [“State of the Air” report](#) showing that nearly half of children in the U.S. live in places with unhealthy levels of air pollution.

LA County Sheriff Department Immigration Transparency Page

Based on advocate concerns raised during a meeting with LA County Sheriff Luna regarding immigrant fear, they have issued formal guidance to all Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) employees regarding **“Witnessing or Interceding with Unreasonable and Excessive Force by an Outside Agency.”**

You can find a copy of the newsletter, along with the corresponding Department policies, on the Department’s transparency page on immigration ([Immigration FAQ | Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department](#))

Our next MCHA Monthly Meeting
June 18, 2026
10 am- 12 noon

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