

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Week of 15, 2025

State Issues

Future of Medi-Cal Commission Created

The California Health Care Foundation has created a Commission of health care leaders to develop a 10-year vision for modernizing California's Medi-Cal program. The Commission comes at a time when changes to the program are needed to address dramatic cuts to funding and programmatic policies coming from both state and federal governments.

Membership. The 29-member Commission will be led by former California Health and Human Services Secretary, Dr. Mark Ghaly and former Chief of Staff to Governor Newsom Anne O'Leary. Commissioners come from across the health care spectrum with a wide range of health care experience and include experts in state and federal health policy, as well as leaders representing Medi-Cal members, providers, managed care plans, health care workers, and community-based organizations.

Members include former State Medicaid Director Jacey Cooper, Dr. Alice Chen who is the former Medical Director for Covered California and now is the Chief Health Officer for Centene, CEO of La Clinica de La Raza Jane Garcia, CEO of CommonSpirit Health, California Region Julie Sprengel, Kim Lewis with the National Health Law Program and Tia Orr representing SIEU. You can find the full list of Commissioners [here](#).

Objectives. The overall goal of the Commission is to develop a state plan for strengthening and protecting California's complex and vulnerable Medi-Cal program. According to the CHCF, "In the face of federal cuts, the easiest thing to do would be just to pare back. But Medi-Cal is too important for that. Now is the time to take a hard look at how Medi-Cal is working — and to take this opportunity not just to protect this program, but to sustain and strengthen it so millions of Californians can get the care they need."

Specific goals. The Commission has laid out five specific objectives.

- 1. Ensuring comprehensive health care:** By providing health, dental, and behavioral health coverage to over one-third of all Californians, Medi-Cal enables low-income families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities to access the care they need to thrive.
- 2. Reducing health disparities:** By making quality care accessible to communities that have historically faced the greatest barriers, Medi-Cal fosters healthier lives for all.
- 3. Providing economic stability:** By shielding families from devastating medical, behavioral, and long-term care costs, Medi-Cal plays an instrumental role in reducing poverty and medical debt.

(more)

<p>Future of Medi-Cal Commission Created (continued)</p>	<p>4. Addressing social needs like housing and healthy food: By providing an array of home and community-based services through programs like CalAIM, Medi-Cal helps Californians maintain housing stability and enables seniors to remain in their homes and communities.</p> <p>5. Filling gaps in coverage: By covering long-term care and essential services, equipment, and supplies for people with disabilities, older adults with low incomes, and children with special health care needs, Medi-Cal addresses critical gaps in private insurance coverage and the federal Medicare program.</p> <p>Call for Bold Ideas. To support the commission’s work, CHCF is seeking bold ideas for preserving and strengthening Medi-Cal. They are inviting policy experts, researchers, health care leaders, and innovators to submit proposals for transformative solutions with a 5- to 10-year time horizon. CHCF will award up to \$50,000 each for up to five selected submissions to develop full papers that will inform the commission’s deliberations. Topics include innovative financing approaches, reimagining managed care, new payment methodologies, and state-federal-county relationships. You can learn more about submitting proposals here.</p> <p>More information. You can Sign up via this link to receive updates from the Commission.</p> <p>Next steps. The Commission will begin meeting in January 2026 and will develop a set of concrete recommendations for the program by early 2027.</p>
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