

Medi-Cal Dental Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 4, 2026 – 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sacramento County Public Health Education Programs

7001-A East Parkway – Conference Room 1

Sacramento CA 95823

Zoom Meeting ID: 160 013 0463

Facilitator: Julie Gallelo, Vice-Chair

Scribe: Jennifer Fitzpatrick

Members Present:

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| • James Musser | • Caroll Badgley | • Debra Payne | • Sam Arnold |
| • Olivia Kasirye | • Julie Gallelo | • Matthew Mouille | • Julia Gusina |
| • Cynthia Johnston | • Darrell Kenworthy | • Cherag Sarkari | • Denise Canacari |
| • Sunanda | • Timothy Martinez | • Morgan Musser | |
| • Bandyopadhyay | • Cynthia Stuart | • Michelle Monroe | |

Members Absent:

- Bilee Hernandez
- Judy Lema
- Monica Montano
- Jonathan Porteus

Members Called in:

- Mary Jess Wilson
- Shannon McConnell
- Robin Blanks-Guster

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Public Present in person or teleconference: Alisha Gutierrez, Amanda Purcell, Brendan John, Brittany Vacura, Candace Oto, Candy Stirdivant, Cordia Losh, David Goodman, David Ferber, Debbie Blanchard, Destiny Rockwood, Eddie Hu, Edith Acevedo, Eric Dowdy, Elizabeth Wong, Hayden Dupell, Heather Castiaux, Jany Souvannarath, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, Joseph Canas, Kimberly Arredondo- Blanco, Kim Benton, Laura Valle, Lisa Nguyen, Margaret Delmore, Marcus Kasper, Melody Law, Michael Tavallaci, MZ Valle, Paul Glassman, Phuong Luu, Rich Newman, Rhoda Gonzales, Richard Lee, Rick Callery, Rosanna Jackson, Roshani Mehta, Santosh Sundaresan, Sam Seiden, Shakalpi Pendurkar, Thomas Lovinger, Tara Good-Young, Valerie Garza, Valerie Huevo.

2:00	Welcome and Introductions	Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm by Julie Gallelo, noting that Chair Jonathan Porteus was unable to attend. Brief introductions held for all attendees in the room.
2:10	Approve Meeting Minutes (Action)	April 2, 2026 minutes reviewed by the Committee. Moved to approve: Debra Payne Second: Cynthia Stuart Vote: All in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion Carried.
2:15	Acknowledgement of Dr. Olivia Kasirye's Service & Approve New Public Health Officer (Action)	Julie delivered a prepared recognition of Dr. Kasirye's contributions to the committee since 2012. Dr. Kasirye expressed appreciation, discussed public health challenges, and introduced incoming Health Officer Dr. Phuong Luu, who also addressed the committee. New Member: Dr. Phuong Luu (Sacramento County Public Health Officer). Moved to approve: Debra Payne Second: Sunanda Bandyopadhyay Vote: All in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion Carried.
2:20	Provider Network Stability: Post-Prop 56 Funding Landscape, Rate Reform Needs, and Advocacy Opportunities	Presented by Morgan Musser. Robust discussion centered on the anticipated reduction of Prop 56 funding and its impact on Medi-Cal Dental provider participation. - Legislative proposals offer only 12–15 month extensions, insufficient to stabilize the system. - Providers considering terminating Medi-Cal contracts due to unsustainable reimbursement. - Concerns about: - Base rates reverting to pre-Prop 56 levels

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	(Action)	○ Administrative burdens ○ Attrition of specialty providers ○ Long-term harm to network adequacy ○ Impact on emergency room dental visits if provider access collapses Recommendations Raised: • Formally activate the <i>Navigating Threats to Medi-Cal Coverage Workgroup</i> to prioritize this issue. • Advocate for incorporating Prop 56 add-ons into permanent base rates. • Explore new revenue sources (tobacco alternatives tax, enforcement of illicit tobacco market, etc.). • Engage CDA and statewide coalitions. Motion: Appoint Morgan Musser as lead of the Threats to Medi-Cal Coverage Workgroup Moved to approve: Cynthia Stuart Second: Debra Payne Vote: All in favor; none opposed; James Musser abstains. Motion Carried.
2:55	Improving Access to Specialty Dental Care: Barriers and Plan Strategies	Presented by Julia Gusina. Julia highlighted significant delays and capacity shortages in endodontics, pedodontics, oral surgery, and hospital dentistry. Examples included patients waiting 6–24 months and families taking out loans to pay for out-of-network care. • Insufficient specialty workforce willing to participate in Medi-Cal • Long waitlists and frequent office terminations from plan networks • Referral system inconsistencies between plans • Administrative barriers in pre-authorizations causing delays • Hospital OR access extremely limited, especially for medically complex children Liberty Dental described referral validation process and acknowledged unintended consequences of their automated referral approval workflow. DentaQuest and HealthNet described specialty referral placement teams and commitment to assisting FQHCs and providers. Plans will reevaluate referral pathways and address administrative bottlenecks. Committee will revisit specialty access as a continuing agenda item in August.

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3:15	MCDAC Workgroup Updates and Next Steps	a. Navigating Threats to Medi-Cal Coverage Workgroup - Now re-activated under new leadership (see item above). b. General Anesthesia Workgroup - Ongoing issues: severe shortage of hospital OR time for dental cases; surgery centers at capacity. - Exploring alternative models such as dedicated dental surgery suites. c. Oral Health Equity Workgroup - Preparing to launch community health worker outreach. - Significant progress on community water fluoridation planning. d. Oral Health Care Integration Workgroup - Reviewed HealthNet pilot for dental screening embedded in initial health assessments. - Need for improved data-sharing and “closed-loop” referral processes. e. Provider Network Adequacy Workgroup - Did not meet; will re-evaluate during subcommittee restructuring. Committee will return in August with proposed restructuring of all workgroups.
3:35	Center for Oral Health/Early Smiles Sacramento Update	Presented by Denise Canacari - Served ~15,000 children and 300 schools in 2025–26 school year. - Transition to billing model ongoing; Prop 56 uncertainty poses risks. - Piloting sealant days and expanding e-consent (QR-code) forms. - Need support for uninsured/unsupported portion of student population.
3:40	CDA Update	Presented by Eric Dowdy - Assembly proposes 12-month Prop 56 extension; Senate proposes 15 months. - Engaging state leaders; uncertainty remains around Governor’s position. - CDA exploring long-term sustainable rate strategies.
3:45	Health Authority Commission Update	Presented by Julie Gallelo & Michelle Monroe - County engaged in comprehensive Medi-Cal outcomes evaluation with national consultant. - Reviewing comparative county models (Alameda, San Diego, etc.). - Dental integration and specialty access concerns will be included in stakeholder interviews.

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	Sacramento County Oral Health Program Update	Cynthia Johnston provided a written update highlighting several key program activities: • The Oral Health Program is currently working on the FY 2027–2030 RFA for the CDPH–OOH Prop 56 grant. Due to anticipated reductions in allocation, the program is evaluating how the funding change may affect staffing capacity and scope of work for the next grant cycle. • The KOHA Workshop Series, held in April and May, was a major success, reaching over 100 unique participants across the three sessions. Cynthia noted strong engagement from partners and positive feedback on the training content. • The program is partnering with California Northstate University to implement a remote KOHA assessment program in gap schools beginning in the 2026–27 school year, expanding access to assessments using remote-enabled technology.
3:50	Dental Plan Updates	Presented by Destiny Rockwood (Liberty), Tim Martinez (Health Net), Matthew Mouille (DentaQuest) • DentaQuest: ○ DentaQuest highlighted 67% network growth ○ upcoming launch of the CARES Committee for enhanced collaboration ○ Provider Spotlight: Kids Care Dental & Orthodontics, now fully participating in GMC, highlighted strong patient engagement, over 5,000 patients treated, a 90% same-visit care rate, high recall completion, and zero grievances. • Liberty: ○ Liberty reported modest network growth over April–May, adding 7 GP providers and 1 specialist, with strong outreach activity including 696 provider calls, 63 visits, and 22 community events serving over 800 residents. The plan continues teledentistry efforts, ICD-10 pilot work with FQHCs, and participation in a DHCS/CMS affinity group focused on increasing utilization among children under age 3. Liberty also noted growing community questions about UIS dental benefits. • Health Net: ○ Health Net reported rising utilization rates since July 1 and ongoing collaboration with DentaQuest and CMS on the 0–3 utilization affinity group. Dr. Martinez highlighted the success of a funded desensitization program at a regional center, with 150 participants, early signs of improved primary care engagement, and potential for future expansion to support greater integration for patients with special needs.

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4:00	Announcements	Public Comment • Several members raised public concerns about misinformation around ER dental care capacity. • Requests for education campaigns and coordinated messaging. Agenda items for August 6 meeting: • Specialty access continuation • Prop 56 developments • Introduction to Sacramento County Health Authority and how MCDAC members can get involved
4:05	Adjournment	• Meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm by Acting Chair Julie Gallelo. • Next Meeting August 6, 2026 at 2:00 -4:00 pm, East Parkway.