

Medi-Cal Dental Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 5, 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: 161 863 4667

Facilitator: Julie Gallelo

Scribe: Laila Zaib

Members Present:

- James Musser
- Sunanda Bandyopadhyay
- Caroll Badgley
- Julie Gallelo
- Olivia Kasirye
- Cherag Sarkari
- Timothy Martinez
- Robin Blanks-Guster
- Judy Lema
- Morgan Musser
- Matthew Mouille
- Denise Canacari
- Debra Payne
- Shannon McConnell
- Michelle Monroe

Members Absent:

- Jonathan Porteus
- Bilee Hernandez
- Darrell Kenworthy
- Cynthia Stuart
- Monica Montano

Members Called in:

- Mary Jess Wilson

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Public Present in person or teleconference: Alisha Gutierrez, Amber Kwiecien, Amanda Purcell, Bakir Abdul Jabbar, Brendan John, Brandie Dunlap, Brittany Vacura, Bobbi Kerktz, Cordia Losh, Candace Oto, Cynthia Yamasaki, Cynthia Johnston, Darren Vinson, David Ferber, David Goodman, David Welch, Dana Durham, Eric Dowdy, Eddie Hu, Edith Acevedo, Felisha Scott, Heather Lawler, Heather Castiaux, Jen Antle, Jessica Jorquera, Lisa Nguyen, Debbie Blanchard, Destiny Rockwood, Jany Souvannarath, Joseph Canas, Kimberly Arredondo-Blanco, Kimberly Steele, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, Laila Zaib, Laura Valle, Marcus Kasper, Margaret Delmore, Marjan Rashedi, Melody Law, Paula Lee, Pana Lee, Paul Glassman, R. Newman, Rajvir Bhogal, Rima Hakim, Rhoda Gonzales, Rosanna Jackson, Rose Aarons, Roshani Mehta, Sam Sieden, Santosh Sundaresam, Shakalpi Pendurkar, Susan McLearn, Sonia Dhillon, Tara Good-Young, Tiffany Turner, Valerie Garza.

2:00	Welcome and Introductions	Meeting called to order by Julie Gallelo.
2:05	Approve Meeting Minutes (Action)	December 4, 2025, minutes reviewed by the Committee. Moved to approve: James Musser Seconded: Debra Payne Motion Carried.
2:10	California Dental Association Update	<p>Overview of CDA Advocacy Efforts – Eric Dowdy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> California is facing a projected budget deficit ranging from \$3 billion to \$18 billion, with variability across estimates. Although early budget receipts are performing slightly better than the Governor’s initial projections, significant federal funding cuts are anticipated. The state remains in a constrained budget environment. <p>Proposition 56 Supplemental Payments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without legislative action, Prop 56 dental payment cuts are scheduled to take effect on July 1 of the current fiscal year and CDA is actively working to prevent implementation of these cuts. <p>Coalition and Advocacy Efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDA is organizing a statewide coalition of 70+ organizations titled Save Our Dental Care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A website (saveourdentalcare.com) is expected to launch shortly. The site will include calls to action, advocacy tools, and informational resources. Advocacy efforts are in the early stages and are expected to intensify over the coming weeks. <p>Legislative Engagement and Public Comment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget subcommittee hearings are scheduled for late March, providing opportunities for public comment. <p>Dentist Survey Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDA conducted a survey of approximately 1,500 dentists, including both CDA members and non-members. Key findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49% of respondents indicated they would likely disenroll from Medi-Cal Dental entirely if Prop 56 payments are eliminated. Approximately one-third reported they would significantly reduce the number of Medi-Cal patients they see. CDA noted that once providers leave Medi-Cal, re-engagement is extremely difficult.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey findings suggest potential long-term damage to the dental provider network. • Results have been summarized in an article available on the CDA website.
2:15	DHCS Updates	<p>Dental Care Coordination – Dana Durham</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dana Durham from DHCS provided an update on the Dental Care Coordination Referral Form, noting that while it remains important statewide, it is less frequently used in Sacramento County due to the transition to managed care. • Under the fee-for-service (FFS) model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5,876 care coordination requests were received. ○ Current average turnaround time is approximately two state working days. • Primary reasons for care coordination requests included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Locating a dental provider ○ Language translation ○ Transportation assistance <p>Sacramento County Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Sacramento County specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1,169 requests were received in 2024 ○ 1,463 requests were received in 2025 • The majority of requests were related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provider access ○ Language assistance ○ Transportation needs • As of July, most provider-finding assistance in Sacramento County is handled through dental managed care plans. • System Improvements and Coordination Efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DHCS is working toward enhancing its website to allow separation and identification of different types of dental providers. ○ DHCS acknowledged ongoing challenges with provider availability, noting concerns that access may become more difficult if Proposition 56 reductions are implemented. ○ Focus areas for coordination include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General anesthesia services ▪ Transportation ▪ Complex member access issues <p>FFS vs. DMC performance Fact Sheet – Richard Newman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data reflects information December 2025 through February 2026, with a focus on (Q3) of 2025. • Language Line Call Volume

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- The top six languages accounted for approximately 80% of all Language Line calls statewide and within Sacramento DMCs.
- Statewide trends:
 - Spanish has remained the leading language since 2023.
 - Spanish calls declined from 58.6% to 44.7%.
 - Mandarin and Russian showed slight increases.
- Sacramento DMC trends:
 - Member call volume increased significantly from 50,153 calls in Q2 2025 to 79,059 calls in Q3 2025, an increase of approximately 29,000 calls.
 - Despite increased call volume, Language Line utilization remained relatively stable.
 - Language Line calls accounted for approximately 51% of total DMC calls in Q3.
 - Vietnamese and Pashto entered the top six languages, replacing Cantonese and Ukrainian.
- **Utilization Trends**
 - Children’s utilization showed a slight improvement from Q2 to Q3.
 - Sacramento FFS data reflected a modest increase in preventive and diagnostic services.
 - Liberty remained the top-performing DMC plan.
 - Health Net demonstrated incremental utilization gains.
- **Procedure Code Utilization**
 - For children ages **0–20**:
 - Dental code D2930 (prefabricated stainless-steel crown on primary teeth) increased from third to second most utilized statewide.
 - Total statewide utilization reached 588,527 procedures in Q3 2025.
 - For adults ages **21 and older**:
 - Utilization patterns remained consistent with Q2 2025.
- **Quality Measures and Future Direction**
 - DHCS emphasized a growing focus on quality measurement in dental managed care.
 - Oversight of quality initiatives is transitioning from analysts to clinical leadership, led by Dr. Delmore.
 - A federally required dental quality dashboard is anticipated by 2029, similar to Medicare plan comparison tools.
 - One newly added measure includes follow-up after emergency department (ED) visits.
 - DHCS is working on tools to improve access to admission, discharge, and transfer (ADT) data to support this metric.

Medi-Cal Dental: Budget and Legislation Impact

- **Dental Benefit Changes for Adults Without Full-Scope Medi-Cal (Age 19+)**
 - DHCS announced the elimination of dental benefits for certain adults age 19+ who are not eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This effort is in response to DHCS requirements for dental managed care plans to complete population needs assessments and to align dental perspectives with medical managed care planning. • It was noted that oral health has not been identified as a priority in population assessments conducted in Sacramento County and Los Angeles County. • The workgroup emphasized the importance of ensuring dental managed care plans are represented alongside medical managed care plans to advance oral health integration. • Strategic efforts are underway to secure participation in relevant committees and subcommittees. <p>Provider Network Adequacy Workgroup - Cordia Losh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workgroup discussed the intent to conduct a joint network adequacy analysis in collaboration with dental managed care plans. • It was emphasized that the goal is not to duplicate existing network adequacy submissions required by DMC or DHCS. • The proposed approach mirrors existing DMC network adequacy filings, with the addition of two data elements not typically included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unique patient encounters per listed network dentist ○ Total encounters per dentist within the network • The purpose of the enhanced analysis is to better understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where patients are accessing care ○ Provider utilization patterns ○ Geographic concentration of services within Sacramento County • This information is intended to support planning and mitigation strategies, particularly in light of potential provider losses related to Proposition 56 changes and other system shifts.
3:20	Center for Oral Health/Early Smile Sacramento Updates	<p>Program Transition and Funding Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denise Canacari provided an update on the Center for Oral Health during a significant period of organizational transition. • After many years of support through dental plan funding, COH is transitioning to a billing-based (rendering provider) model to sustain operations. • This shift represents a major change in program operations, and the upcoming months will serve as a critical testing and adaptation period. • Appreciation was expressed to all dental plan partners for their continued support during this transition. <p>School-Based Program (ESS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Early Smiles School-based (ESS) program has operated for approximately 10 years and is one of COH's most successful initiatives. • The program currently serves approximately 15 school districts. • Concerns have been expressed by school nurses regarding the potential discontinuation of services.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COH reaffirmed its commitment to the mission of oral health for all, serving children regardless of insurance status. <p>Leadership Transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update was provided on recent leadership changes. • Brendan John has assumed the role of Interim CEO. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He previously served as Board Chair. ○ His appointment provides continuity and organizational familiarity. <p>Billing-Based Model Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COH has already reduced screening staff from five to three positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This reduction may limit the number of schools served. ○ The Program Manager supports both fieldwork and backend billing functions. ○ The next 2–3 months will be used to assess sustainability and operational impact. ○ A full schedule is currently in place for the upcoming months. ○ Additional funding opportunities will be pursued where possible. <p>MDRAN and Referral Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental plans are no longer utilizing MDRAN. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COH may continue limited use; however, data will no longer be updated by plans. ○ COH plans to work directly with plan portals to navigate referrals moving forward. • Dental plans explained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MDRAN was intended as a medical-dental integration tool. ○ Approximately 98% of referrals originated from COH, indicating limited medical utilization. ○ Data showed many referred children were already dental utilizers. ○ As a result, continued funding of MDRAN was not aligned with program goals or stewardship of state funds. • Plans noted interest in exploring a potential MDRAN 2.0, pending evaluation and measurable outcomes. <p>Stakeholder Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacramento County representatives noted that changes to COH operations significantly impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) activities ○ Grant deliverables and school-based screening efforts • A request was made for dental plans to continue discussions on possible support options. • Plans acknowledged the impact and reiterated their commitment to collaboration within regulatory constraints.
3:30	Health Authority Commission Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Updates • Next meeting is scheduled for February 19th, 2026
3:38	Sacramento County Oral Health Program Update	<p>Sacramento County Oral Health Program Update – Cynthia Johnston</p> <p>National Children’s Dental Health Month (NCDHM) Activities</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sacramento County Oral Health Program provided updates on activities conducted in recognition of National Children’s Dental Health Month which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development and dissemination of social media content on SCOHP webpage. ○ Collaboration with the County Public Information Office (PIO) to create: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An article was shared for community members on Sacramento County News page. ▪ A billboard displayed at Highway 99 and Calvine Road. ▪ A poster displayed at the Sacramento County Administration Building on K Street. ○ Hosting library story time at the Sacramento Public Library (Rancho Cordova location), including distribution of books and toothbrush kits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of the Brush, Book, Bed program to families and children. ○ Partnership with SDDS to sponsor puppet shows at two Natomas Unified School District campuses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will receive toothbrushes and oral health resources for families. ○ Recognition and Proclamations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appreciation was expressed to First 5 Sacramento Commission for drafting and supporting the proclamation recognizing February as National Children’s Dental Health Month. ▪ The proclamation was presented to the County Health Officer, Dr. Olivia Kasirye. <p>Oral Health Champion Toolkit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Oral Health Champion Toolkit continues to target prenatal care providers. • During the past month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seven toolkits were distributed in partnership with UC Davis. <p>Oral Health Needs Assessment and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program is in the final stages of updating the Sacramento County Oral Health Needs Assessment, a grant deliverable. • Upon completion, the program will begin development of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CHIP submission deadline: June 2026 (end of the fiscal year). <p>Community Partnerships and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning is underway for a Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) workshop to be offered in Spring. • The workshop will be conducted in partnership with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ California Northstate University and Dr. Glassman • Training will include instruction on the remote KOHA screening program for Sacramento County school districts. <p>Additional Program Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 35 Brush, Book, Bed “in-a-Box” kits were distributed during the past month.
3:40	Dental Plan Updates	<p>Liberty Dental Plan Update – Destiny Rockwood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liberty Dental Plan provider network expansion included:

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- 5 new general practice (GP) providers
 - 2 new specialist providers
 - 1 new office location
 - **Provider Outreach and Engagement**
 - Provider outreach activities conducted during the reporting period included:
 - 591 provider service calls
 - 44 provider site visits
 - **Member Outreach and Community Engagement**
 - Liberty Dental Plan hosted or participated in:
 - 14 members and community events
 - Nearly 1,500 members educated or impacted
 - **Member Communication and Education**
 - Liberty Dental Plan continued regular member text messaging campaigns focused on oral health education.
 - Campaign metrics included:
 - Over 16,000 text messages sent
 - 16% click-through rate
 - Opt-out rate below 1%
 - **Value-Based Care Program**
 - Liberty Dental Plan continues implementation of the BRUSH value-based care program.
 - Program highlights:
 - Includes caries risk assessment (CRA) benefits beyond ages 0–6
 - Coverage extends up to age 21
 - Providers receive incentive payments based on improved CRA outcomes.
- DentaQuest update- Matthew Mouille & Heather Castiaux**
- **Marketing and Outreach Campaign Updates**
 - DentaQuest team provided an update on marketing and outreach efforts for Q4 2025, with a focus on increasing brand recognition and oral health education across California.
 - A paid social media campaign generated:
 - Over 2,500 impressions
 - Approximately 7,000 clicks
 - Social media advertising drove 16,000 clicks to the DentaQuest Medi-Cal website and contributed to follower growth, surpassing the original goal, with 12,000 attributed followers.
 - Community outreach efforts in Q4 included:
 - 9 community events
 - Nearly 4,000 total attendees

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- Upcoming outreach activities include 3 planned events in Sacramento County
- **Member Education and Support**
 - At outreach events, the team distributed oral health education materials and hygiene supplies.
 - During January, the outreach team assisted seven members with:
 - Navigating the DentaQuest website
 - Using the Find-A-Provider (FAP/FAT) tool
 - Locating benefit information and answering dental coverage questions
- **Provider Engagement and Network Development**
 - Over 50 provider site visits were conducted across the region.
 - Network expansion updates included:
 - 4 new provider additions
 - 2 new provider locations
 - 5 provider training courses were conducted, including:
 - 2 ICD-10 trainings
 - ICD-10 training courses will continue on an every-other-month basis, with approximately 10 training courses remaining in the current calendar year.
- **Case Management Highlight**
 - A case management update was presented by Heather Castiaux, emphasizing the impact of DentaQuest’s care coordination efforts.

Health Net Dental Plan Update- Felisha Scott

- Felisha Scott provided an update on Health Net’s planning in response to ongoing discussions regarding Proposition 56 and potential impacts on provider participation.
- Health Net has developed provider incentive programs to help offset the possible loss of Prop 56 supplemental payments.
- The current base reimbursement rate for a basic child exam, cleaning, and fluoride is \$59.
 - Under Prop 56, an additional \$59 was previously added, bringing total reimbursement to \$142.
 - Health Net will continue to pay the \$59 base rate and offer an additional \$125 incentive when an exam, x-rays, and cleaning are bundled on the same day.
 - Total bundled reimbursement equals \$184, which is comparable to typical PPO pediatric reimbursement rates.
 - A sealant incentive program is also in place, providing an additional \$11.50 above the SME rate.
- Health Net will continue to evaluate and adjust programs as circumstances evolve.
- Health Net utilizes real-time hospital admission data (ADT feed) due to its role as both a medical and dental plan.
 - This data identifies dental members who present to emergency departments.
 - Health Net conducts outreach to these members to connect them with dental care in a more timely manner.

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3:50	Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A committee member emphasized the importance of maintaining unity and cohesion during periods of uncertainty. • The committee member expressed concern based on recent information suggesting that reinstatement of Proposition 56 funding may be unlikely. In response, the member stated support for pursuing a carve-out for general anesthesia services for children aged seven and under.
3:53	Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda items for the April 2, 2026 meeting were acknowledged and will be finalized by leadership. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committee members to submit written documentation regarding Kaiser dental cancellations during strike for DHCS follow-up. ○ Managed care plans to present dental care coordination processes and alignment with DHCS referral pathways
3:54	Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting adjourned by Julie Gallelo. <p>Next Meeting April 2, 2026 2:00 -4:00 pm at East Parkway.</p>