

Academic Rigor on a Legislature's Timeline



Letter From The Director

Greetings! Welcome to CHBRP's Spring 2025 Newsletter.

We're just now catching our collective breath after the annual sprint we take during our "peak season." Although this is the 16th year I have experienced it, I am still amazed by the productivity, commitment, and talent of the CHBRP's staff, faculty, researchers, and campus analysts, as well as our actuaries, librarians, and editors. The CHBRP team completed all its analyses by last week, covering a wide array of timely topics. This included 12 CHBRP bill analysis reports and an assessment of the premium impact of a short list of benefits being considered for California's new Essential Health Benefit (EHB) benchmark plan, totaling 13. CHBRP also provided testimony and answered questions at the [Joint Informational Hearing](#) by the Senate and Assembly Health Committees on 2027 Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Options, held on February 11.



While we catch up on sleep, we pivot to other important activities, including supporting the Legislature as they consider the legislation that is moving and digest the work that CHBRP has recently completed. CHBRP staff are present at health committee hearings and remain available to answer questions to bill authors, legislative staff, and bill sponsors.

Looking a bit farther ahead, we're excited to welcome a talented group of summer

interns, including both undergraduate and graduate students, with numerous projects lined up for them. We also begin our annual summer stakeholder meetings, as well as regrouping with CHBRP's faculty, the task force, and the national advisory council. We launch numerous summer projects and quality improvement efforts, as we are committed to continuously refining and improving our work and processes. I hope that everyone gets an opportunity to enjoy the fleeting magic of springtime.

Until next time.

Warmly,
Garen

Updates from CHBRP

Welcome, Anna Pickrell!

Anna Pickrell, MPH, is CHBRP's newest Principal Analyst and joined us in February. Anna hit the ground running, and has already become a valued member of the CHBRP team. We are thrilled she has joined us and we look forward to Anna getting to know many of CHBRP's stakeholders.

Prior to joining CHBRP, Anna was an Advisory Services Analyst at Mathematica, where she evaluated federal and state policies and programs designed to improve access to affordable insurance coverage as well as physical and mental health services for children and low-income populations. Previously, she was a Manager of Applied Analytics with Real Chemistry, where she oversaw digital analytics projects for clients in the life sciences. Anna holds a Master of Public Health in Health Policy and Management from UC Berkeley and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Macalester College.



CHBRP's 2025 Analyses

So far, CHBRP has completed 13 analyses in 2025. The Legislature may request additional updates as bills are amended. All completed analyses are available on CHBRP's website.

Take a look at the **"Status of Bills"** page to see the portions of CHBRP analyses that remain relevant after amendments are made to analyzed bills. This is also available on CHBRP's website under Completed Analyses.

Click on the bill numbers below to see analyses and infographics of:

- [Assembly Bill 298](#) (Bonta) Health care coverage cost sharing
- [Assembly Bill 350](#) (Bonta) Fluoride Treatments
- [Assembly Bill 432](#) (Bauer-Kahan) Menopause
- [Assembly Bill 546](#) (Caloza) HEPA purifiers and filters
- [Assembly Bill 554](#) (González) Antiretroviral drugs, drug devices, and drug products
- [Assembly Bill 575](#) (Arambula) Obesity Prevention Treatment Parity Act
- [Assembly Bill 1032](#) (Harabedian and Rivas) Coverage for behavioral health

visits

- [Senate Bill 40](#) (Wiener) Insulin
- [Senate Bill 242](#) (Blakespear) Medicare supplement coverage: open enrollment periods
- [Senate Bill 257](#) (Wahab) PARENT Act
- [Senate Bill 535](#) (Richardson) Obesity Treatment Parity Act
- [Senate Bill 626](#) (Smallwood-Cuevas) Perinatal health screenings and treatment
- Accelerated Analysis of Premium Impact of California [Essential Health Benefits](#) Expansion

All previously completed analyses are also available on CHBRP's website.

Status of Bills

Completed Analyses

We want to hear from you!

Last newsletter, we asked readers to guess how many bills CHBRP would analyze this year. One anonymous contributor guessed correctly: 13!

Looking ahead, CHBRP is exploring hosting a seminar with experts. What topic should this seminar discuss? Ideas include AI in health care and market consolidation. Take the **survey** to provide input.



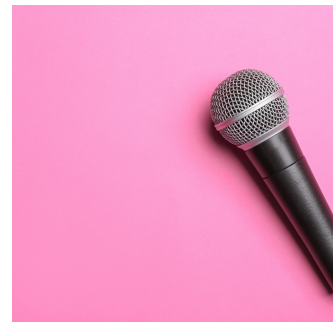
Take me to the survey!

Recent Presentations

In preparation for the new legislative cycle, CHBRP held two webinars:

- CHBRP's Annual Legislative Briefing
- Fundamentals of California Health Insurance

The recordings and slides for both webinars are available on CHBRP's website.



Additionally, CHBRP was pleased to co-host with the UC Student and Policy Center in Sacramento a briefing on prescription drugs in March. Kristen Hwang of CalMatters facilitated a discussion between two of CHBRP's Task Force Members, Drs. Marilyn Stebbins and Jonathan Watanabe.

Recent Presentations

Recent and Useful Publications





Enrollee Health Care Expenditures: Premiums, Cost Sharing, and Noncovered Expenses

CHBRP analyses discuss various forms of enrollee health care expenditures. Take a look at **this** Health Care Nuts and Bolts for an overview of premiums, cost sharing, and noncovered benefits.



Comparison of State Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plans

As California reconsiders its **Essential Health Benefits** selection, take a look at CHBRP's Health Care Nuts and Bolts to see an overview of benefits covered in other states and how states have updated benchmark plans since 2020.

See all of the above materials and many more on CHBRP's **website**.

See all Resources

See all Nuts and Bolts

Task Force and NAC Spotlight

Each newsletter, CHBRP features two Task Force or NAC members and the important work they do outside of CHBRP. See more information about all of our Task Force and NAC members on CHBRP's **website**.

Carlos Gould, PhD

Dr. Carlos Gould is an assistant professor at the University of California San Diego, where he works as an environmental health scientist studying drivers of environmental exposures and their impacts on public health with the aim of reducing exposures to improve health outcomes for low-income and marginalized communities. As part of this work, he studies the potential benefits of a clean household energy transition and examines the impacts of wildfire smoke and temperature on health in California. He is also part of the public health team on CHBRP's Task Force, where he assists CHBRP with analyzing bills through a

public health lens, with the goal of establishing the context in which bills are written, as well as evaluating the potential impact of bills on public health.

Dr. Gould's interest in health policy stems from an initial interest in climate change and the environment, as well as the challenges that communities face, particularly those that are marginalized or from lower income backgrounds. As an undergraduate at Yale, he participated in fieldwork in Honduras, where he surveyed households to understand their household energy use patterns with the intention of finding ways to make their energy use more efficient. Many of these individuals rely on firewood for their cooking needs, and in doing this fieldwork, he came to understand how people make basic choices about their energy usage and how these choices are impacted by their environment and circumstances. His time in Honduras gave him an appreciation for the realities of daily life and human behavior and how those factors influence our environmental exposures, and thus, our health. These lessons still guide his research today. He aims to contribute to improving health by designing programs and policies that reduce exposure and enable communities to adapt to emerging environmental health hazards.



According to Dr. Gould, CHBRP offers faculty the unique opportunity to be on the forefront of health policy change. Research is done on the cutting edge, but working with CHBRP enables faculty to experience the intersection of policy change, practice, and research, allowing faculty to lend their expertise to critically evaluate literature and help drive change. Much of the way in which public health is defined and happens in the US and California specifically is circumscribed by healthcare policy, and working with CHBRP offers a way for him to learn about new topics in public health and better understand the systems in which Californians receive and utilize healthcare. Dr. Gould is most proud of the fact that his research and the problems he tackles matter and are relevant to the populations that he cares about. He wants to ensure that his research remains valuable to the broader academic community, but also stays true to his core mission of helping vulnerable populations.

Stuart Altman, PhD

Dr. Stuart Altman is a professor at the Heller Graduate School of Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. With a distinguished career in health policy and management, he has consistently brought an independent political perspective to critical issues affecting Americans. His work has spanned areas such as national health insurance, cost control, healthcare delivery systems, and physician training, and his contributions have influenced policies that address significant challenges within the U.S. healthcare system.



He began his career in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a high-level policy analyst in the federal government's Department of Health, Education, and

Welfare, where he played a key role in shaping key healthcare policies and systems. Later, he served as a visiting professor at UC Berkeley's School of Public Policy before becoming the Dean of the Heller School for Social Policy at Brandeis University. In addition to his academic positions, Dr. Altman held several notable positions in the federal government. He chaired the group advising the Medicare program on hospital payment systems, served as a member of the Congressional Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, and chaired the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission. In this latter role, he analyzed and advised the Massachusetts Legislature on healthcare cost containment, which has allowed him to bring valuable insights to his advisory role with CHBRP.

Dr. Altman currently serves as a member of CHBRP's National Advisory Council (NAC), which provides diverse perspectives on the broad trends in U.S. and California health policy and healthcare systems. His role involves assessing how well CHBRP anticipates changes in the current environment and incorporates these insights into their analyses. The NAC supports CHBRP's senior management and analytical teams by reviewing their research and ensuring the quality and relevance of their findings. In addition to CHBRP, he has extensive experience running and advising analytic groups that provide legislators with critical insights into the health system. "I find the professional work done by CHBRP to be among the best I've seen in the country," says Dr. Altman. "Their work is first-rate and critically important because what they do and say influences the legislature of an important state like California. Because they listen to their advisory committees, the whole process is very rewarding."

Looking ahead, Dr. Altman hopes to continue serving as an independent advisor to CHBRP, helping the organization maintain its high standards. He emphasizes the importance of CHBRP continuing to function at its current exceptional level during increasingly complex times. His goal is to support CHBRP in continuing its critical analyses and impactful work to address healthcare challenges effectively.

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