

Academic Rigor on a Legislature's Timeline



Letter From The Director

Happy New Year to all our readers. Welcome to CHBRP's Winter 2026 Newsletter.

Protracted December rains have certainly helped abate drought concerns across most of the state, and here at CHBRP, we are fully immersed in readying ourselves for the busy legislative season ahead.

A Productive Start to the Year

We have been incredibly productive already this year, as you will discover throughout this newsletter edition. We are thrilled to welcome fourteen new members to our Task Force and are hard at work onboarding these new contributors. We have also released new educational materials and publications, and we are actively supporting our stakeholders with three upcoming educational webinars (see more below).

Refining Our Communication Approach

The complexity of the policy environment continues to grow, and the decision-support needs for policymakers have grown commensurately. In response, we are taking concrete steps to help meet these challenges by refining our approach to communicating complex and technical information in our bill analyses and other publications.

Our multi-pronged approach includes:

- **A new look and feel for our legislative analyses ("CHBRP Bill Analysis Reports"):** We are investing in changes to the design and format of our materials, which will help policymakers access key information more readily while keeping the full body of supporting research easily accessible. Our increased use of visuals and one-page summaries are in direct support of this initiative.



- **New educational resources:** We have been hard at work producing new resources specifically designed to support the information needs of legislative and agency staff.
- **New collaborations:** We are actively developing new collaborations and partnerships to promote and translate evidence and foster the next generation of public scholarship.

Without further ado, I wish all our readers a healthy and prosperous year ahead.

Until next time.

Warmly,
Garen

Updates from CHBRP

Upcoming Webinars

Join CHBRP for our upcoming **virtual webinars** on key topics as we prepare for the upcoming Legislative Session! The next webinar is tomorrow!



Tomorrow! CHBRP's Annual Legislative Briefing

Legislators, legislative and agency staff, advocates, health plan staff, and the public are warmly invited to our annual legislative briefings of CHBRP. We will discuss **tips on working with CHBRP** and demonstrate how CHBRP serves as a **bridge between academia and the policy-making process** within the Legislature's fast timeline.

Register for the date that works for you (the same content will be presented in both sessions).

January 29, 1-2pm



Fundamentals of California Health Insurance

Need a reminder on the differences between medical and pharmacy benefits?

Want tips on remembering the different types of cost sharing?

We'll cover this and more in a webinar discussing key health insurance concepts and resources designed specifically to help with understanding the California health insurance landscape.

February 12, 1-2pm

February 26, 1-2pm

**SAVE THE
DATE**



Save the Date for a Co-Hosted Aging Seminar

CHBRP will be co-hosting a lunch-time seminar on aging with the University of California Student and Policy Center (UCSPC) in downtown Sacramento on Wednesday, March 25th. More information to follow.

CHBRP's 2026 Analyses

CHBRP has already kicked off the year with a new analysis. An [updated letter](#) for **AB 298 (Bonta) Cost Sharing** was submitted on January 7th based on January 5th amendments.

All requested analyses are included on CHBRP's [Recent Requests](#) page. On Monday, CHBRP received a request to analyze **AB 1570 (Wilson) Diagnostic Imaging**. Interested parties are encouraged to provide scientific evidence relevant to CHBRP's analyses of proposed health insurance benefit mandates to CHBRP's staff. In order for CHBRP to meet its statutory 60-day deadline to complete its analyses, CHBRP must receive this information within 14 days of announcing a legislative request.

Take a look at CHBRP's [Completed Analyses](#) page to read previous analyses, as well as the [Amendments and Analysis Updates](#) webpage to see which portions of CHBRP's analyses remain relevant based on the final version of the legislation.

[Recent Requests](#)

[Amendments and
Analysis Updates](#)

[Completed
Analyses](#)

Calling UC Students! Join CHBRP for Summer 2026

CHBRP is recruiting motivated **University of California** undergraduate and graduate students for two distinct paid summer positions in 2026:

- **Data Visualization**
- **Policy**

These 10-12 week, full-time positions can be virtual or hybrid. **The deadline to apply is Friday, January 30th.**



[More Information and How to Apply](#)

Recent Publications



Health Insurance Benefit Mandates in California State and Federal Law

This **Resource** reviews existing state and federal health insurance benefit mandate laws that may relate to the subject or purpose of a proposed state health insurance benefit mandate or repeal bill.



Federal Recommendations and the California and Federal Preventive Services Benefit Mandates

This **Resource** identifies potential overlap between the federal benefit mandate requiring health insurance coverage of some preventive services and California state benefit mandates.

A yellow rectangular graphic with a stylized sunburst or starburst pattern in the background. The year "2025" is written in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font in the center.

Year in Review

CHBRP was busy in 2025! Take a look at all we accomplished in this **Year in Review**.



Utilization Management

An **Explainer** about the tools used by health plans, health insurers, and pharmacy benefit managers to help ensure patient safety, increase efficiency, and manage costs.



California's Office of Health Care Affordability (OHCA)

Two new products on OHCA! Learn more about OHCA in CHBRP's **Explainer** and **Health Care Nuts and Bolts**, including its governance structure and the spending targets set by the Health Care Affordability Board for 2026 and beyond.



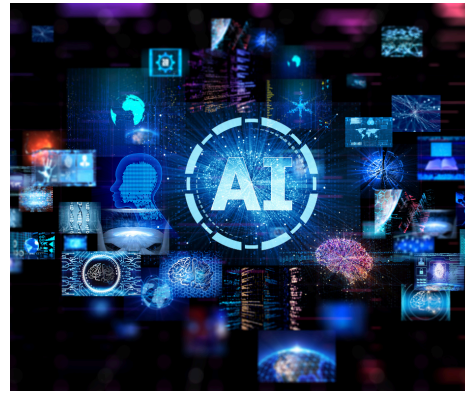
Medi-Cal Rx: An Overview

This **Explainer** provides a brief introduction to Medi-Cal Rx, the state program responsible for pharmacy benefits for Medi-Cal recipients. Learn more about the history of the program, who it serves, and how it differs from commercial insurance.



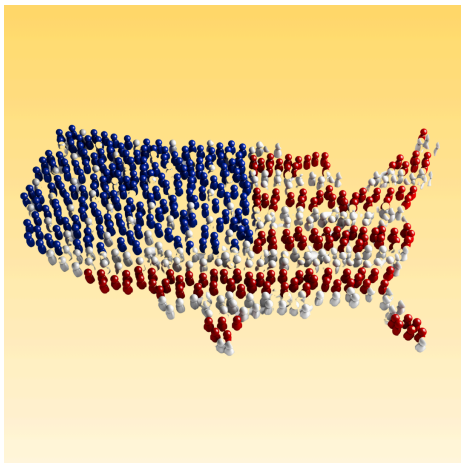
Mental Health Parity Laws: The Landscape

A **Health Care Nuts and Bolts** providing an overview of federal and state mental health parity laws.



Artificial Intelligence and Healthcare in California

This **Policy Snapshot** provides an overview of recently introduced bills in California that aim to regulate AI in healthcare settings, as well as bills signed into law in 2025 that aim to enhance safety for AI users beyond the healthcare industry.



Coalition Maps: A Look at State Health Alliances

A **Health Care Nuts and Bolts** providing an overview of recently announced coalitions between states as a way to take an independent approach to public health.



AB 144 Health Trailer Bill and California Vaccine Recommendations

A **Health Care Nuts and Bolts** providing an overview of California's AB 144 and vaccine recommendations.

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

[See all Resources](#)

[See all Nuts and Bolts](#)

Welcome to CHBRP's New Task Force Members

Welcome to CHBRP's new Task Force Members! See more information about all of our Task Force and NAC members on CHBRP's [website](#).

Curious who serves on a CHBRP Bill Analysis Team? Our [new graphic](#) provides an overview of a team and the role of each member.



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