



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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## **COMMISSIONERS**

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DYNASTY TAYLOR  
ANDREW YAM

## **COMMISSION STAFF**

**Executive Director**  
LA FRANCE TOLIVER

**Commission Secretary**  
STACIA GURR-OSBORN

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, March 21, 2024**

**Location #1:** Exposition Park District  
3833 S. Vermont Avenue, 3rd Floor - Conference Room B  
Los Angeles, CA 90037

**Location #2:** ElHessen Home Office  
9433 Ives Street  
Bellflower, CA 90706

**Location: #3:** Upward Bound  
12841 W. Washington Blvd.  
Culver City, CA 90066

Please note this is a summary of the meeting not a “verbatim” transcription.

### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / ESTABLISH A QUORUM/ COUNTYWIDE LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chairperson

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. Commissioners ElHessen and Pearson attended the meeting from an alternate location under the Brown Act Teleconferencing rules. A quorum was established at 10:10 a.m. Dr. ElHessen read the Countywide Land Acknowledgement statement.

### **Roll Call/Commissioners Present:**

Yvonne Chan, Ed.D.	Summer McBride
Sue ElHessen, Ed.D. (Vice Chair)	Pollyanna Lee
Joni Byun	Booker Pearson
Sam Joo	Michael Flood
Veronica Lewis	Andrew Yam

### **Commissioners Absent:**

Adele Andrade-Stadler (Chair)	Dynasty Taylor
Mihran Kalaydjian	Joe Brown

### **Commission Staff:**

La France Toliver  
Stacia Gurr-Osborn

### **Introduction of Guests**

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., DPSS  
Hector Flores, DPSS

### **2.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE FEBRUARY 15, 2024, MEETING MINUTES**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chairperson

The Chair called for a motion to approve the February 15, 2023, minutes. Commissioner Byun approved, and Commissioner Joo seconded the motion. The Chair called for the vote by roll call and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote as follows:

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., (Vice Chair) - Aye	Summer Mc Bride- Aye
Joni Byun - Aye	Veronica Lewis - Aye
Yvonne Chan - Aye	Pollyanna Lee - Aye
Summer McBride - Aye	Booker Pearson - Aye
Sam Joo - Aye	

### **3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items) / (Agenda Items)**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chairperson

No public comment written, online, or in-person.

### **4.0 DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., Director

Dr. Contreras provided an update on the following topics:

The Board Made the following Proclamations for the month of March 2024: **National Social Work Month** recognizing social workers throughout the County for their heroic contributions and for transforming lives and creating resilient communities for County residents. **Women's History Month** celebrating Women's History Month by acknowledging the vital role of women throughout American history and their fundamental contributions that influenced and shaped our global society today. This year's theme, "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion," focuses on the importance of justice in all aspects of women's lives, including equitable pay, healthcare disparities specific to women's health issues, and gender inequality or bias in the workplace. **National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month** is dedicated to raising awareness about colorectal cancer, prevention, and early detection.

**National Nutrition Month** encouraging individuals to make informed choices about nutrition. **Veteran Women's Month and Improving Support for Veteran Women.** In addition, the Board has also proclaimed: March 29, as **National Vietnam War Veterans Day.**

**Customer Service Center (CSC) Update**

Good News, we are back on track with making our CSC Quarterly reporting to you. As previously shared, the Department’s CSCs manage two operations. One is our **General Inquiry Line**, and the other is our **Intake Line**, which accepts applications for our four primary programs (Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs, and General Relief). This is data you would have normally received in January so you will be seeing updated numbers for January-March at our April meeting.

CSC (October 2023 – December 2023)

	October	November	December
<b>Calls Received by EWs</b>	589,233	611,272	615,810
<b>Average Wait Time</b>	0:32:25	0:42:13	0:39:55
<b>Average Handle Time</b>	0:18:06	0:16:51	0:16:59
<b>*Non-Serviced Calls</b>	23,232	*	*

\* All customers who reach the high call volume message are offered the option to return to the self-service option or disconnect the call (Non-Service Calls). However, this data is not available as it is being validated. Once validated, the data will be available from March 14, 2024, moving forward.

Intake Call Centers Applications (October 2023 – December 2023)

	October	November	December
<b>Applications Received (Overall)</b>	145,371	147,097	132,260
<b>Same Day Disposition Rate by Program (Overall)</b>	57%	56%	57%
<b>*Applications Processed by CSC Intake / %</b>	45,676 / 31%	39,930 / 27%	38,862 / 30%

**LGBTQ Services and Resources**

I am pleased to announce our DPSS website is introducing a new LGBTQ+ Resources Page. As you know, we are committed to providing equal and meaningful access to all individuals applying for or receiving DPSS administered programs.

The webpage offers YouTube videos celebrating Pride Month; CDSS SOGIE Information page and SOGIE Policy/DPSS ePolicy. We are providing links to the Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity; and Local LGBTQ+ Community Resources. Additional resources include a list of partnerships DPSS has with LGBTQ+ community-based organizations with the goal of raising awareness about CalFresh benefits to encourage participation in applying for benefits and services.

Lastly, I wanted to share that last week I had the opportunity to participate in the second of two 2024 CWDA (County Welfare Directors Association of California) Lobby Days, which is an important time to build relationships and raise awareness of our priorities, which included:

- Opposing the proposed cuts to the CalWORKs Program, which total over \$400 million Statewide (\$105 million estimated for Los Angeles County). The cuts include the permanent elimination of the Family Stabilization and Expanded Subsidized Employment programs, which provide crisis supports to CalWORKs families and tangible real-world job skills and experience to improve families' employment prospects in addition to base cuts to case management and other employment services.
- Supporting a one-time allocation for IHSS Administrative Funding. Specifically, requesting support for \$51 million General Fund (GF) Statewide (\$15 million estimated for Los Angeles County) on a one-time bases to county human services for administration of the IHSS Program and budget trailer bill language to update the budgeting formula to ensure sustainable state fiscal support for this critical program.

**Follow up Item:** Commissioner Joo stated regarding the succession rate of the CSCs, he thinks (1) for the one's that get denied, are there primary reasons for the denial? (2) When we can't resolve issues on the first call, is there a primary reason why it's not resolved? Dr. Contreras stated we have this information. She can include it in my update for next month.

**Follow up Item:** Vice Chair ElHessen asked regarding the CalWORKs funding, is there any timeline where the decisions are going to be made regarding the Governor's Budget cuts? Have you heard about that? Dr. Contreras stated it is our understanding the cuts would not be made final until the May Revise is released. They are looking at taking early action. We just received some preliminary information about that. I will come back to you to share specifics, but there is an eagerness to reduce the current budget in this fiscal year as quickly as possible. Is there something the Commission can do, like a letter to support you? If so, please let us know.

**Follow up Item:** Commissioner Pearson stated regarding the CalWORKs cuts, he was sent the updated CalWORKs Homeless Family population that DPSS serves. It has exploded dramatically in the past three to four years. I was wondering if the county or the department is considering a letter or lobbying with some facts about this effect would have on this population. I would also like subject to be discussed as a future agenda item to discuss the explosion of the number of homeless CalWORKs families.

Dr. Contreras stated piggybacking on what Dr. ElHessen's recommendation about a letter, I think there's a number of these issues that we could emphasize. We are happy to work with you on crafting a letter and making sure we're getting that information.

Commissioner Lewis suggested that she could mobilize the homeless service providers because we should be one of the loudest voices here. Given that you know the region my organization serves, SPA 6 is the most impacted by homeless families, and even though they are keeping over 300 families off the street every night, there are 100 plus every month that we cannot serve because of capacity. HSP again pours a significant amount of money into that infrastructure. She can mobilize the HSPs as she has not heard anybody talk about this in her sector. If its okay, she will reach out to you for more information in terms of what are the key things that we should be saying that will get the attention of the Legislature, that would be helpful.

**Follow up Item:** Are the HSP dollars related to State or Federal dollars or both? Is there a one or two pages that summarizes the proposed budget in terms of these cuts? Dr. Contreras stated yes, we can get that to you.

## **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

**Presentation:** Overview of the Medi-Cal Program  
Hector Flores, Human Services Administrator III  
Medi-Cal Program Section

Mr. Flores provided the following information:

Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid program, jointly funded by the state and federal government. Its purpose is to provide comprehensive healthcare coverage to eligible individuals and families. Medi-Cal is managed by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) in partnership with county social services agencies.

Comprehensive Medi-Cal Coverage includes but is not limited to: Doctor visits, hospital care, emergency services, prescription drugs, laboratory services, mental health care, maternity and newborn care, preventative services (i.e. screenings and vaccinations), basic vision and dental services.

Eligibility determination is based on income level, family size and California residency. Eligible individuals include adults, children, pregnant women, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. Expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act extended coverage to adults without children ages 19 to 64, who were previously excluded from the program.

The enrollment process is made through the following application methods online through BenefitsCal website, by mail, phone, in-person at county social services offices, or Online through Covered California website. The enrollment for Medi-Cal is open all year-round.

Medi-Cal provides vital healthcare access and coverage to millions of low-income Californians who would otherwise be uninsured. Medi-Cal aims to reduce health disparities by ensuring access to healthcare services for vulnerable populations. Mr. Flores provided a graph of the Medi-Cal caseload in LA County by Supervisorial District and the Actual & Projected Medi-Cal Renewal Workload data.

The Continuous Coverage Unwinding (CCU) period is a 14-month period in which all counties are expected to initiate and complete the processing of all Medi-Cal renewals and return to normal operations by the end of the CCU period. The CCU period began April 1, 2023, and will end on May 31, 2024.

The DHCS requested and received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medi-Cal Services (CMS) to apply various eligibility flexibilities to assist counties in the processing of Medi-Cal renewals and to reduce procedural discontinuances during the CCU period. The flexibility waivers apply to beneficiaries whose Medi-Cal renewal has not been processed during the CCU period and for Medi-Cal renewals due through December 31, 2024.

Income flexibility Waivers 0-100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) allows for the processing of the renewal without income verification when the income reported at renewal is at or below 100% of the FPL. Stable Income Waiver allows for the processing of the renewal without income verification if stable income (e.g., Social Security income) has been previously reported and the beneficiary is only receiving income from this stable source. These income waivers were automated in the system and have increased our overall renewal processing rates.

As of January 1, 2024, a new law in California allows adults aged 26-49, regardless of immigration status, to qualify for full-scope Medi-Cal. With full-scope Medi-Cal, aged, blind, and disabled individuals can apply for the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. IHSS provides in-home assistance as an alternative to out-of-home care and enables recipients to remain safely in their own homes.

As of January 1, 2024, assets such as bank accounts, cash, vehicles, and homes are no longer counted when determining Medi-Cal eligibility. The benefit of the change means more individuals qualify for Medi-Cal, more individuals have access to health care; and having assets will no longer negatively impact beneficiaries. The Estate Recovery Program still applies under certain conditions. The Department is committed to encouraging eligible individuals to apply for Medi-Cal coverage and raise awareness about the programs benefits and services.

Commissioner Lewis stated there's a significant number of people who are transient and moving around, precariously housed or completely unhoused. Can you talk a little bit about what that strategy looks like and or the support that you will need from people like street outreach teams are engaged. What support can the department use for folks that are unsheltered? Mr. Flores stated he did not have the answer to the questions at this time. He will have to talk with our outreach district that schedules and attends these events to learn their strategy.

**Follow Up Item:** Commissioner Lewis suggested sharing Med-Cal Outreach materials / brochures with DHS who is over the countywide street-based outreach strategy to assist with the Medi-Cal outreach efforts across the county.

Commissioner Chan stated in the education sector now, we are trying to get a good data system that will allow us to bill Medicare, health, and multiple players. There is an initiative called Children Youth Behavioral Health Initiative. She asked if DPSS was familiar with this initiative? Many students still struggle with the aftereffects of COVID-19. She thinks we should be able to build Kaiser, Blue Cross, etcetera, etcetera, so that we can get help for the kids faster. The CEO will partner to provide the health services that provide the mental health, and the big thing is the behavioral health and substance abuse.

**Follow up Item:** Dr. Contreras asked Commissioner Chan if she could share her information about the Children Youth Behavioral Health Initiative so that that the department can explore what the potential could be.

Commissioner Joo suggested that the department continues to find ways to reduce barriers to and increase access.

Commissioner Lewis expressed her appreciation to the department for all they do, all the maneuvering, dealing with all the federal, state and even some of our county politics around this and the county requirements because it is a lot. You are describing a lot of different moving pieces to help people access healthcare to maintain healthcare.

Commissioner Byun stated I'm curious if you track how outreach efforts overlay to when numbers or calls go up, because I would love to know if someone is interviewed on dead window then you get more influx of calls to that get tracked and like what outreach for those kinds of different things might be more helpful so that you do that again for future. Dr. Contreras stated I don't believe that the call centers have that ability.

**Follow up Item:** Commissioner Byun stated I think that would be an interesting future topic just to think about, like communications and outreach and how the different kinds of aspects will be more useful than others.

**Follow up Item:** Commissioner McBride said thank you for bringing up the outreach, because that's something Commissioner Joo and I talked about when we went to the Inglewood event. We shared notes and came up with some questions based on our observance. She will share their notes with La France and would like to request an outreach presentation.

Vice Chair ElHessen thanked Dr. Contreras, Mr. Flores, and Ms. Molina for the great presentation and for answering the commissioners' questions. She also wanted to emphasize that part of the strategic plan that was brought to the commission is inclusive of what we were discussing today. In addition to looking at our seniors who are going to be baby boomer seniors. I don't know if we as a state or county are prepared to handle. Just as an observation the baby boomers are the highest number.

She is seeing that a lot of homeless persons are older seniors, and it really breaks my heart to see them on the streets struggling financially. A lot of these baby boomers will be increasing given the housing situation, the cost of housing, retiring with limited to no savings in many circumstances. She wanted to put it out there when we are looking at budgets, and supporting DPSS in our commission's role, writing letters, whatever we can do the advocate as a commission, it's important because this consistent base is one of our dominant bases.

She is not looking for a direct response right now, but believes it is important to keep them at the forefront of our conversations.

## 6.0 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice-Chairperson

### Future Topics:

Commissioner Pearson like subject to be discussed as a future agenda item the explosion of the number of Homeless CalWORKs families in reference to the CalWORKs Homeless chart provided to him.

Dr. Elhessen stated she would like to work with Dr. Contreras regarding a letter to support CalWORKs initiative you started which supports single parents as well as foster youths that are homeless struggling and homeless.

Dr. ElHessen wants to look at future topics in regard to emergency preparedness and how that would impact our recipients and in-home supportive services to acme sure we have our providers trained for our most vulnerable populations. I'd like to put this out there as a possible future topic.

Commissioner Lewis would like presentations on all the different employment related partners and with more of the outcome data and other data because economic stability is housing stability. Taking a deeper dive and have a presentation that really looks at some outcomes that includes correlation data analysis so we can understand how effective, or pain points are related to the employment resources that DPSS provides directly and that could include partnerships with them. Even with the new department DCEO as well, but I'd love to see something specifically for all employment stuff in more in-depth data shared in that presentation.

Commissioner Chan suggested she would like to see how all the major departments (e.g., DCFS, DPSS, DMH etc..) work together to give a whole person approach. If there is such a strategy, she wants to learn more about that.

Commissioners' Flood, McBride, Joo, Byun and Yam are interested in DPSS Outreach strategies across programs.

## 7.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.