



# COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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[PSS Commission Webpage](#)



## COMMISSIONERS

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SUMMER MCBRIDE

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VERONICA LEWIS

YVONNE CHAN, Ed.D.

## COMMISSION STAFF

### Interim Executive Director

MIGUEL BARRIOS

### Commission Secretary

MICHELLE NGO UNG

## MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday, April 16, 2026**

### Location #1: Exposition Park District

3833 South Vermont Avenue, 3rd Floor, Conference Room B,  
Los Angeles, CA 90037

### Location #2: ElHessen Home/Office

9433 Ives Street,  
Bellflower, CA 90706

### Location #3: Porter Ranch Library

11371 Tampa Avenue,  
Porter Ranch, CA 91326

### Location #4: Manhattan Beach Library

1320 Highland Avenue, Room B,  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

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 Chair

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m. A quorum was established. The Chair read the countywide land acknowledgement.

### Roll Call/Commissioners Present:

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chair

Adele Andrade-Stadler

Andrew Yam

Booker Pearson

Christine Salazar

Genevieve Riutort

Juan Leaños

Mihran Kalaydjian

Pollyanna Lee

Veronica Lewis

Yvonne Chan, Ed. D.

### Commissioners Absent:

Summer McBride (Chair)

Dynasty Taylor  
Joni Byun  
Sam Joo

**Commission Staff:**

Miguel Barrios  
Michelle Ung

**Introduction of Guests**

Michael Sylvester, Chief Deputy Director of Public Social Services, Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

**2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items) / (Agenda Items)**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chair

Miguel Barrios, Interim Executive Director, acknowledged that there was no one present in the room to make a public comment on a non-agenda item. He asked if anyone attending the meeting virtually had any public comment to make on non-agenda items. If so, they would have three minutes to discuss their item. Jaqueline Chavez raised her virtual hand and was acknowledged to speak.

Jaqueline Chavez explained that she is the Executive Director for Community Bridge Housing and has made repeated efforts to raise the concern with the Commission regarding DPSS's use of a 2-person per bedroom occupancy limit to deny housing subsidies in the General Relief (GR) Housing Subsidy Program. She explained that she questions whether the law is being followed on the matter and added that, as a service provider to her community, they cannot spend their limited resources on the matter. She clarified that her team is stepping back from trying to resolve this through dialogue and would allow legal counsel and, if necessary, the courts to address the matter going forward.

Mr. Barrios acknowledged that there was no one present in the room to make a public comment on an agenda item. He asked if anyone attending the meeting virtually had any public comments to make on an agenda item. There was none.

**Follow-Up Item:** Vice Chair ElHessen stated that the Commission would like DPSS to give a presentation of the GR Housing Subsidy Program in general at a future meeting, potentially in May.

**3.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE MARCH 19, 2026, MEETING MINUTES**

Sue ElHessen, Ed. D, Vice Chair

Vice Chair ElHessen opened the floor for comments on the minutes, and there were no corrections. Commissioner Pearson moved to approved and Commissioner Kalaydjian seconded the motion. The Vice Chair called for the roll

call. The March 2026 minutes were approved by majority vote (9 -Ayes) with one abstention as follows:

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chair – Aye

Adele Andrade-Stadler – Abstain

Booker Pearson – Aye

Christine Salazar – Aye

Genevieve Riutort – Aye

Juan Leaños – Aye

Mihran Kalaydjian – Aye

Pollyanna Lee – Aye

Veronica Lewis – Aye

Yvonne Chan, Ed. D. – Aye

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

Michael Sylvester, Chief Deputy Director of Public Social Services, on behalf of Jackie Contreras, Ph. D, Director of DPSS

Mr. Sylvester provided the following State of California updates:

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided implementation guidelines for Assembly Bill 42, and effective March 1, 2026, any grant, award, scholarship, loan, or fellowship that is awarded for the purpose of attending a higher education institution is exempt as income for CalWORKs (CW) and CalFresh (CF). This means that financial aid will no longer be counted as income when determining eligibility for those programs.

The Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Restaurant Locator online tool is now available for seniors, disabled residents, and unhoused individuals in Los Angeles (L.A.) County to locate a participating restaurant through the CF Restaurant Meals Program, where they can use their CF EBT card to buy ready-to-eat meals. The new tool can be located online at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/rmp> or through DPSS's CF [Restaurant Meals webpage](#).

On March 23, 2026, L.A. Care announced \$500K in emergency food assistance grants to 10 community organizations, supporting families struggling to access groceries due to CF disruptions and federal shutdowns from last year. The 10 community organizations selected were Antelope Valley Boys & Girls Club, Meet Each Need with Dignity, God's Pantry, El Centro De Ayuda, St. Joseph Center, University Muslim Medical Association, Kingdom Causes Bellflower, The Children's Clinic, Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services, and Project Angel Food.

Mr. Sylvester provided the following L.A. County updates:

The Chief Executive Office (CEO) announced the appointment of Genie Chough as the Interim Director of the Child Support Services Department (CSSD), effective

Wednesday, April 1, 2026. Ms. Chough has over 29 years of experience at the local, State, and federal government levels addressing public policy and budgets.

Fesia Davenport announced her decision to step down from her role as Chief Executive Officer, effective April 16, 2026. In her message, she reflected on the tremendous value our teams bring to County residents and constituents, while also acknowledging the constraints under which we operate.

Mr. Sylvester provided the following Board of Supervisors (BOS) updates:

The BOS directed the Acting Chief Executive Officer and County Counsel to develop a community-driven process for the renaming of parks, streets, County facilities, real property, monuments, and other County programs that bear the name of Cesar Chavez, including the removal of related imagery in civic artworks.

The BOS also directed the Acting Chief Executive Officer and County Counsel to rename the County holiday honoring Cesar Chavez as Farmworkers Day, in alignment with recent actions by the California Legislature to acknowledge the legacy of farmworkers, address ongoing challenges, and reaffirm our commitment to their dignity and rights, beginning this year, and annually thereafter. Also, to remove the name and likeness of Cesar Chavez from all County holiday-related events, communications, and materials, and update existing materials accordingly; refocusing any events that proceed on themes of farmworker justice, labor rights, and community service.

The BOS made the following Proclamations for the month of April 2026:

Autism Acceptance Month, Armenian History Month, Arts Month, Child Abuse Prevention Month, County Volunteer Month, DMV/Donate Life Month, Fair Housing Month, Arts for LA20th Anniversary Month, Cambodian Heritage Month, April 6 through April 10 as National Community Development Week, April 11 as National Pet Day and Dog Therapy Appreciation Day, April 11 through April 17, as Black Maternal Health Week and April 16 as The Day of the Black Infant, April 17, as Home Visiting Day, April 17 as Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Day, April 24 as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day and April 19 through April 25, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week

Mr. Sylvester provided the following DPSS updates:

On Saturday, April 25, 2026, the March of Dimes (MOD) will host an in-person walk starting at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum to celebrate 56 years of its mission to raise funds to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. This year also marks the 42nd anniversary of L.A. County's partnership with the MOD in this significant effort to improve the health of mothers and babies throughout the County.

The Community Engagement Unit has been conducting in-person presentations to discuss DPSS Programs, how the public can apply for benefits, Toy Loan Program, Volunteer Services, BenefitsCal, our social media platforms, how DPSS can serve populations in multiple languages, including individuals who require American Sign Language and/or other accommodations when connecting with us, and the changes coming to CF and Medi-Cal (MC). At the end of February, our Community Engagement Unit presented in both English and Spanish to L.A. Unified School District parents. In March, they also conducted a presentation with the Department of Public Health (DPH) in English and Spanish with over 80 attendees. They also presented to the Department of Health Services (DHS) outreach team and their staff in Van Nuys. In late March, there was a presentation done with mainly community-based organizations (CBO) in attendance. In April, the goal is to work with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to deliver presentations to community health organizations in Long Beach, Inglewood, and the South Bay areas. Also, our Community Engagement Unit is working to coordinate community presentations that will be conducted in Armenian, Farsi, Spanish, and Tagalog.

The CF Nutrition Program Outreach team continues outreach efforts and campus collaborations with the community and universities to better connect low-income residents to CF in alignment with Assembly Bill (AB)1326 (2021). Per AB 1326, all Counties in California are required to work with public colleges and universities to establish points of contact for programs that those counties administer, such as CF. Our outreach team serves as the higher education liaison, coordinating with 27 public community colleges and universities to support students and help address their nutrition needs. They also work with CBOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to deliver CF presentations. The unit also participates in community and campus events. The outreach team also collaborates with the Department of Economic Opportunities (DEO) Small Business Office to conduct webinars for restaurant owners interested in becoming authorized Restaurant Meal Programs vendors.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Lewis asked if DPSS tracks how many students actually take advantage of signing up for CF from these efforts. Is there any data? Mr. Sylvester stated he will take that back and get data on these efforts.

Commissioner Chan asked about DPSS's position on AB 2765, CF, and CW for Childhood Hunger and Foster Youth. She explained that the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) provided a position of support for this waiver being proposed. Mr. Sylvester stated DPSS would follow up with the CEO's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations (LAIR) on their position on AB 2765.

## 5.0 NEW BUSINESS

Presentations:

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Compliance Project

Brianna Williams, Program Assistant  
David Ahia, Principal Application Developer

H.R. 1 CalFresh and Medi-Cal Policy Changes  
Shawn Amiel, Division Chief  
Sherri Cheatham, Division Chief

Cheryl Blanchette, Division Chief for the Strategic Initiatives Division, introduced her colleagues: Marcia Blachman-Benitez, Director of the Civil Rights Section (CRS), Brianna Williams from the CRS, and David Ahia from the Information Technology Section.

Mr. Ahia explained that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 included Section 508, which provides a lot of detail about digital accessibility, and they have the foresight in that set of regulations to provide for an alternative set of guidelines for accessibility. The World Wide Web Consortium developed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) as the replacement and modernization of those guidelines that we are to use today, which are the industry standard. DPSS is expected to meet those guidelines with all of our new websites and mobile applications. He clarified that DPSS implemented a new public website in 2020 and a new employee portal in 2023. At the foundation of those sites, DPSS ensured that the platform, the underlying platform, was accessible. DPSS ensured that the content on our sites would be monitored for accessibility.

Mr. Ahia shared that the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a notice that proposed rulemaking, which reaffirms the ADA, and further specifies that any government agencies involved with the administration of Federal programs must bring their websites into compliance. That was in August of 2023, so DPSS was in a really good position at that point because there had already been work done in that area to ensure that our websites were compliant. But one of the areas that we needed to work on was our documents, specifically our PDF documents. From 2024 to 2025, we put together a committee and worked on a project to ensure that all of our documents were remediated during that time. In the meantime, the Internal Services Department (ISD), with the Chief Information Office (CIO), determined that as of January 2026, all new documents and websites must meet compliance both internally and externally. The deadline from the DOJ for compliance is April 26th, 2026. So, in just another 10 days is our deadline.

Mr. Ahia further explained that DPSS has been very proactive in this area, working to ensure the websites are compliant from the very beginning of our websites, going back to 1997, when we first started. We were looking at compliance then. DPSS understands that the constituents that we serve have a particularly high rate of disabilities that impact them, and we are cognizant of that, and want to make sure that we are serving them well. DPSS also wants to ensure that staff are equally

served. They have just as much a right to accessibility as the public. And finally, ADA is a federal law. It's the law, and we must comply with it.

Mr. Ahia introduced Ms. Brianna Williams, who is actively involved with the webpage review process. She stated that it's important to understand how DPSS customers are accessing our websites. DPSS wants to make sure that they are visually able to see everything while keeping in mind that a lot of DPSS customers with disabilities are dealing with assistive technology. Assistive technology can be anything from a screen reader, a magnifier for their screen, the ability to tab through content instead of using a mouse for someone who may have a physical disability, as well as a mouth stick where users can utilize their mouth to navigate the screen. All of that is completed in the back end to make sure that there's a logical order to the content and that anyone, regardless of their disability, has access to the same information.

Ms. Williams added that there have to be checks and balances in this process. She stated she is part of the digital accessibility unit, where they are reviewing documents for accessibility prior to them being published publicly. At this time, the unit has remediated over 400 documents. This is a pretty big number in our department because we started with over 3,500 documents on our websites. Within that time, we've allowed authors to either remove content that's either outdated or not being used, so that the 3,500 initially was sliced in half, and we had our authors working on the remaining documents. Additionally, the unit has reviewed over 2000 webpages since October 2025 and continues daily. Everything is reviewed for accessibility prior to it going up on our website. Lastly, DPSS is actively working to increase its accessibility score. DPSS is currently at 85.4%, but the CIO has set a standard for 90%. We are working to get that as high as we can with the content that we have. We want to maintain the integrity that we have while acknowledging that this is going to always be an ongoing process, since we're constantly adding information and updating information for the public.

Ms. Williams elaborated that in January of 2025, the CRS released a WCAG compliance policy, which addresses the basic standards for web accessibility, including alternative text for images, reviewing contrast for images and text, and making sure the reading order for all of our web content is logical for all of our users. DPSS has designated authors and approvers within each section of DPSS to ensure that we have identified people who need training and understanding of WCAG. The first round of training conducted for staff was through the State of California Emergency Management Office. They provided a free training to the majority of our DPSS authors and approvers. DPSS also posted a training on our internal Talent Works platform back in October of 2025, again a free training that was created by Adobe themselves to help our authors create accessible content, and lastly, all of our web pages are going through a workflow to ensure that they go through an

ADA review to ensure that all of the content on that page, including the documents, are accessible to all customers.

Ms. Williams introduced Marcia Blachman-Benitez. Mrs. Blachman-Benitez added that the Digital Accessibility Project began more than three years ago. This is just a brief glimpse into how we enhanced the DPSS public-facing websites and the DPSS internal employee website to improve accessibility for all. It has been a collaborative effort between the CRS, ITD, and the communications team, along with the Project Management Office (PMO) and our content creators. We met with colleagues from across the state, fellow county departments, and multiple software service companies to gain a greater understanding of best practices to move forward. The effort required a lot of training strategies for more than 800 folks over two years at no cost to the county. DPSS is furthering our commitment to accessibility by ensuring that the accreditation of our digital accessibility unit comes to fruition with a nationally recognized certification. DPSS is making sure that our digital accessibility team is certified in the next few months. The CRS also continues to support our colleagues by providing technical assistance on a daily basis. DPSS is proud to be one of the leading departments in this county-wide effort.

Commissioner Lewis complimented the team on all their hard work to make information accessible, but wanted to clarify if this was a special project to bring the department into compliance, and what would happen after it's done, or if it would be an ongoing effort. She also asked what that unit looks like, how many people are in that unit, and what the process looks like. Lastly, she wanted to learn more about the frequency of the assessment of all DPSS webpages being accessible and generating that overall rating percentage.

Mr. Ahia responded by stating that something that everyone has to understand is that website content is constantly changing, and accessibility is not something that you achieve; it's an ongoing process. DPSS's score has gone up and down over time. The current is an average over multiple sites and has been above 90% previously. He clarified that there is a scanning process that evaluates all of that. It's roughly every week that it cycles through all of the DPSS sites, evaluates, and tells us what things that we need to look at to fix. We then go through the process of notifying our content authors and instructing them on how to remediate those things, as well as looking at the programming of our website. This is an ongoing process, and it's going to always fluctuate. We have a manual review. We get guidance from people with disabilities to assist us in improving our site, there is just an ongoing project that will continue well into the future. He added that the digital accessibility unit is a part of the CRS within DPSS. Given it's all fairly new, it's a small unit of two and a supervisor reviewing videos, web pages, documents, whether that be PDF, Excel, or even checking the alternative text on the images. He also explained that even though it's not a big unit, DPSS has a system that does that for us. The county standard for accessibility is a system called Site Improve, which is

also the same system that the DOJ uses, so that is our standard that we follow. It rotates through a whole lot of sites throughout the county, as well as other agencies, and it gives DPSS the information about what needs to be addressed. DPSS gets reports letting us know, hey, we're having a dip in this section. And that's where we can jump in and see that these Portable Document Format (PDFs) on that specific website are outdated and need to be remediated. DPSS can inform the author that they should prioritize this effort to remediate because the report also provides the number of times that the document has been clicked on. Commissioner Riutort asked about the goal of being at 90% and if that is the threshold that is required to comply with the DOJ, or if that is an internal threshold. She also wanted to know how we measure up against other counties.

Mr. Ahia clarified that the standard was set by our CIO. The CIO released a technology mandate for compliance, which included several items, one of which was that our Site Improve score should be 90 or higher, that we pass manual review, and that all of our documents meet remediation standards based upon the software that they're produced in. And that's the gist of those standards that they've put together in collaboration with the County Council. Commissioner Riutort asked how that is different from what the DOJ requires, and if there are any consequences if DPSS does not meet the requirement. Mr. Ahia answered that the DOJ states that DPSS must be in compliance. Ms. William added that the DOJ understands that this is a large undertaking, especially for departments and entities that serve a large number of the public. What the DOJ has given DPSS is the standard that they're expecting, and that we continue to work on accessibility. So even if there are documents that are a little older, as long as we're actively working to make sure that the website is compliant, we technically are in compliance. However, it can. It is possible that if someone tries to access information on a DPSS website and they reach a barrier, they can have some sort of legal action. However, DPSS has created a webpage where there is a form available to users to report any accessibility issues they may run across on the website. They can provide us with the Uniform Resource Locator (URL), the assistive technology that they're using, and the issues that they came across, and it'll automatically come to our ADA help email address, where we can address them. Mr. Ahia further explained that the DOJ has indicated it could levy fines against the agencies that are not in compliance. That would be after April 26, 2026. The likelihood of that is probably very low, especially for any agency that is actively involved with bringing its webpages into compliance. It's really about the spirit of that effort that they're really looking for, because like I said, compliance is not achievable. It's always going to be a work in progress.

Vice Chair ElHessen introduced the H.R. 1 CF and MC Policy Changes presentation.

Ms. Amiel, Division Chief of the GR and CF Division, stated that the focus of this presentation would be the U.S. House of Representatives 1 (H.R. 1) bill's impact on the public. Together with her colleague, Sherri Cheatham, Division Chief of the MC and In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Division, they will discuss the changes that are coming. The first change goes into the State Standard Utility Allowance (SUAS) limitation, and it changed how it is applied to cases. To be eligible for the deduction now under these changes for the SUAS, it's going to be limited to households with elderly, 60 years or older, or disabled who are not paying heated and cooling separately from the shelter expense. For those who are going to be impacted, we're asking you to be very clear when explaining that you're paying for your heating and cooling separate from your rent or mortgage. DPSS estimates 137,640 CF households without an elderly or disabled household member will be impacted. DPSS launched a communication campaign to inform impacted customers about this change.

The next impact is from the Immigrant Non-Eligibility Policy change. Effective April 1, 2026, H.R. 1 eliminated CF eligibility for refugees, parolees, asylees, battered noncitizens, and trafficking victims. CDSS implemented this change on the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) automation, so DPSS was able to meet the April 1<sup>st</sup> implementation date. Unfortunately, this change is clear; if you do not meet the type of non-immigrant eligibility, you will be discontinued. Despite the change, this is going to happen through a process, which means not everybody is going to get discontinued all at once. This means that at application, anybody applying on or after April 1 or during their recertification, they will be discontinued if they no longer meet the requirement. For example, if a customer's recertification is due in November 2026, they would be impacted in November 2026. Through clarification from the state on this policy, DPSS estimates that 10,860 customers are impacted. DPSS is working with some of its partners to make sure that we're giving customers resources like food pantries, food banks, and any additional resources.

Ms. Amiel explained that the next population to be affected, and arguably the most challenging, is the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). ABAWDs are subject to time limits, meaning that within a 36-month period, they can receive only three full months of CF benefits before needing to meet work requirements to continue receiving CF. On June 1, 2026, DPSS will implement this change, and not everyone will be impacted at once. This will affect new applicants first, and then through the recertification periods. This means that if there is an ABAWD in your household, you are subject to time limits. Another change H. R. 1 made is to the exemption criteria. CF individuals are eligible for an exemption from time limits if they are under 18 or over 64 years of age; reside in a CF household with a member under 14; are medically certified as mentally or physically unfit to work; participate in the Office of Refugee Resettlement Training

Program; are exempt from work registration; are pregnant; or are Indian, Urban Indian, California Indian, or other Indians eligible for Indian Health Service. H. R. 1 eliminated three exemptions and increased the age range to 65. It used to be that if you had a dependent in the household, 18 and under, you were exempt, but H.R. 1 dropped it back to under 14. So, if you have a child 13 and under, you're exempt. H. R. 1 still maintains the exception for medically certified as mentally or physically unfit, if you are participating in the Office of Refugee Resettlement training program, if you're exempt from work registration, and if you're pregnant. H. R. 1 eliminated three exemptions: former foster care, veterans, and the largest hit for DPSS is if you were homeless. H. R. 1 did add one additional population, and that was Indian, Urban Indian, California Indian, or other Indians eligible. As of March 2026, DPSS deemed that 259,850 ABAWDs are not exempt and will need to meet work requirements.

Ms. Amiel explained how someone can meet work requirements. First, if they're employed and they're working 80 hours a week, that may be through paid employment through an employer, self-employment, or in-kind work. If they're working below 80 hours, they would have to try to meet it in some way to supplement the hours missing. Also, participating in some type of training program that may be made available through CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET) Programs, Trade Acts Programs, or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Programs. If they are working in community engagement, like volunteering, doing community service, that will also be a way to meet the requirement. The CF Work Requirement Rule states that you have to do 80 hours a month or 20 hours per week to meet that requirement. A different pathway to satisfy the requirement that has a lower threshold is workfare. Workfare is different in that it doesn't have the 80-hour requirement. What we do is that we are allowed to get the minimum wage of the area and divide it by the CF allotment for that individual to calculate the number of hours they have to clear per month. For example, if somebody is getting the allotment of a household of one and we divide by the county minimum wage, that person would have to do 17 hours per month.

Ms. Amiel illustrated what the new customer experience due to the changes of H.R. 1. She stated that a new application and at renewal, staff are going to be focused on several things during their interview assessment to determine if the individual is a non-citizen, how the expenses are through the SUAS and get the right deduction and determine if there are any work registrants in the house and if so, determine if there are any ABAWDs in the household. The most important part of the assessment is to determine if they qualify for any exemptions. DPSS wants to identify any exemptions to exempt as many customers as possible. DPSS estimates 250,000 or so customers are non-exempt, but that is not the whole population. According to data from March, around 310,000 customers are ABAWDs, but we have been able to identify exempt customers, and that's what's going to help us.

The importance of these interviews is to identify new information that the customer may not have previously shared with DPSS that could exempt them. That is the first line of defense. The second is, once we've determined they don't qualify for an exemption, to ask if they've used up their countable months. Countable months are the terms that we use to refer to the three months out of the 36-month period during which they can receive benefits without meeting the requirement. We want to determine if they have used them yet. If not, we can apply one for you, and you can start using their three-countable months. The goal is that you want to save those months because this is a period of 36 months. In situations where individuals lose their jobs or an exemption falls off, you want to be able to maintain those countable months for those situations. If an individual has used their countable months already, and they don't qualify for any exemptions. We have to explain how they can meet their work through employment and ensure they're working the right number of hours. DPSS has to get customers accustomed to reporting to us any changes and the importance of having that verification on file, so that their case doesn't terminate.

Ms. Sherri Cheatham to provide an overview of the State and Federal H.R. 1 changes for MC that also impact IHSS. She shared a timeline of the changes starting on January 1, 2026, that goes through October 1, 2028. In January 2026, DPSS implemented the asset reinstatement policy change and the MC expansion freeze. The asset reinstatement reinstated the asset limit for certain households, where the limits are \$130,000 for individuals and \$65,000 for every individual added to the household up to 10 people. The MC expansion freeze became effective again in January of this year for individuals applying for MC who are 19 and older without satisfactory immigration status. They would no longer receive full scope MC; instead, they would begin receiving restricted scope. The restricted scope only covers emergency services and pregnancy services. Also, starting July 1, 2026, there's another change with the enrollment freeze population. There is a group of individuals who, prior to January 1, if they applied for MC, regardless of immigration status, they were eligible to receive full scope MC. It is this group that, starting in July, will continue to receive their full scope MC, but they will lose their dental coverage. They will continue to receive all of the other primary care services and medications, but they will lose their dental services. They will only receive emergency dental services such as experiencing bleeding in the mouth that does not stop, painful swelling in and around the mouth, an infection in the gums or teeth with pain or swelling, or you have a broken tooth, or you lost a tooth, or if you have braces and your wires cut, a toothache or jaw pain, after-surgery care such as bandages or stitch removal. Ms. Cheatham encouraged anyone to visit the [What Medi-Cal Members Need to Know](#) webpage to see a comparison of what is covered depending on whether you receive full-scope, full-scope with no dental, or restricted-scope MC.

Ms. Cheatham discussed the amended definition of a qualified non-citizen for MC. Starting October 1, 2026, H.R. 1 changes the definition of who is a qualified non-citizen, limiting federally funded full-scope MC to United States citizens, Lawful Permanent Residents, Certain Cuban/Haitian nationals, and Compact of Free Association (COFA) country nationals. Also, as of January 1, 2027, MC renewals will occur every six months for adults ages 19-64 enrolled under the Adult Affordable Care Act (ACA) Medi-Cal Expansion. DPSS estimates that 1.4 million beneficiaries will be impacted by this change. However, many in this group will complete their renewals through auto-renewal. For example, DPSS sends files to the federal government, and the federal government agrees they are already aware of Ms. Cheatham's income, and the income is within a threshold match, and it can be auto-renewed. In this example, Ms. Cheatham's benefits would be active until the next renewal in 2028. A packet will not go out, only a notice letting Ms. Cheatham know her renewal is valid through 2028. However, if the information DPSS sends to the federal government contains a discrepancy, a packet will be generated for Ms. Cheatham to complete. Ms. Cheatham would be able to return the packet to DPSS in the postage-paid envelope, or complete it via BenefitsCal, call the Customer Service Center (CSC), or complete it via telephone. The customer in this scenario will receive two reminder notices and one robocall with a reminder that their renewal is due. DPSS estimates that 53% of our population will be automatically renewed. Within the group of customers that will have to complete six-month renewals, we have about 15,000 IHSS recipients who will also have to complete them every six months. Other MC populations not subject to the six-month renewal requirement will continue to complete annual renewals, including individuals receiving MC under any other coverage group (e.g., Non-MAGI, Parent/Caretaker Relative, children, etc.), individuals on restricted aid codes, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, pregnant individuals, or those in the 12-month postpartum protection period and children under age 19.

Ms. Cheatham also shared that, effective January 1, 2027, adults ages 19-64, enrolled under the ACA Medi-Cal Expansion, aid code M1, must complete 80 hours of "community engagement" activities to receive MC coverage. Community Engagement Activities include education, volunteering/community service, and earning an income, representing at least 80 hours of the federal minimum wage (\$580) per month. It is estimated that 1.4 million beneficiaries will potentially be impacted. For education, at least enrolled half-time; however, DPSS does not have the complete details of what this will look like yet. One of the things we do know is that people who are working it's calculated based on the federal minimum wage, which is \$7.25 an hour. \$7.25 multiplied by 80 hours a month is the \$580 income that must be earned per month. When you calculate that with our local minimum wage, it really turns out that somebody only has to work approximately 35 hours a month because the requirement is to earn \$580 a month.

It's focused on the income earned, not the hours worked. Another benefit is that the State of California has explained that if a participant is a CF and MC customer, if they're meeting the CF work requirements, or if they're meeting the CW requirements, they are considered to have met the MC work requirements too, so they don't have to do both. The following individuals will be exempt from the work and community engagement requirements: Individuals entitled to or enrolled in Medicare Part A or Part B, former foster youth under age 26, American Indian and Alaska Natives, parents, guardians, or caretaker relatives of a dependent child age 13 and under or a disabled individual, pregnant individuals or individuals receiving postpartum coverage, Individuals incarcerated or recently released within 90 days, Individuals meeting Temporary Assistance for Needy Family or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program work requirements, fully disabled veterans, individuals participating in a drug/alcohol treatment program; and medically frail. DPSS is waiting for the definition of medically frail, whether it will be based on the state or federal definition. DPSS estimates 40% of our population is meeting the requirement via employment or by one of the exemptions.

Ms. Cheatham provided a walk-through of a customer who is submitting an application or a renewal. The customer or applicant will submit their application or renewal through BenefitsCal, the call center, online, or in person. A customer can do all of those things; however, there is an interview to discuss an insert that is going to ask all the questions related to work requirements and community engagement. The state created the insert that is to be included with all applications and renewals, and it will be part of the packet that customers will have to complete. DPSS anticipates staff will be spending a lot of time going through this insert to ensure all questions are answered. Based on the information, the eligibility staff will determine if they are meeting the work requirement or if they qualify for an exemption. If they are not meeting the work requirements, they will help explain how to best meet the requirements.

Ms. Cheatham also explained the new retroactive MC. The current law allows customers to present medical bills that they have for up to three months prior. Starting January 1, 2027, individuals in the ACA MC Expansion group, aged 19 to 64, will have only one month of retroactive coverage. Everybody else is eligible for two months of retroactive medical coverage. Also, Effective October 1, 2028, co-payments will be imposed for adults in the ACA MC Expansion group (ages 19 through 64), with income over 100% of the Federal Poverty Level limits. Co-payments will be between \$1 to \$35 per medical service and may not be more than 5% of the individual's income. Beginning July 1, 2027, a \$30 per month premium will be applied to individuals between the ages of 19-59 without Satisfactory Immigration Status who are receiving full-scope MC with no dental coverage. This premium is per person, not per household. If your MC is discontinued for non-payment of the premium, you can restore benefits by paying the premium.

Ms. Amiel explained that DPSS is sharing information on available food resources if CF benefits have been impacted, working with the CEO and Poverty Alleviation Initiative team to provide information needed for food distribution, and developing a resource listing on available work requirement opportunities. Please note that workfare and community service/volunteer sites must be non-profit CBOs, FBOs, or Government agencies. DPSS has been active for the last 8 to 9 months, trying to recruit workfare, community service, and volunteer sites. By June 1, 2026, DPSS will provide customers with resources on where they can go. DPSS is trying to get these partners on board and informing the community about the changes coming and how we want these community service and volunteer sites to help customers meet the work requirements. DPSS is also trying to leverage technology to develop an application to allow customers to create a profile to search for a work site for workfare or community service. We want the application to be as informative as possible to provide the location, hours of operation, and the type of duties involved at the site. One of the efforts in recruiting these organizations is that they are going to be asked to work through this application, so they can keep it updated with how many people are currently volunteering there and the number of hours they've completed. DPSS has already engaged internal partners to integrate the information that is going to be added to this application into CalSAWS to ensure current information and prevent terminations.

Ms. Amiel explained that DPSS has engaged the community on H.R. 1 policy changes by conducting policy information sessions, launching communications plans via the DPSS website, social media, text/outbound call campaigns, and presenting to various media outlets, developing the "Keep Your Benefits" campaign and specialized policy webinars, worked with county departments, CBOs, and other partners.

Commissioner Lewis asked how DPSS plans to use CalSAWS to ensure eligibility and if customers with unsatisfactory immigration status will still receive pregnancy services. Ms. Amiel explained that DPSS is hoping the application they are developing will interface with CalSAWS so the hours can be updated continuously, rather than having to ask the participant or the organization for the latest information and wait for it. She also clarified that participants can still receive pregnancy services under restricted scope, but it won't be the full component of pregnancy care that includes prenatal vitamins. Commissioner Lewis asked what the additional work for DPSS is going to be in having to navigate all these changes. Ms. Amiel answered that DPSS has known about needing to implement ABAWD changes, but COVID happened, so there was already some work done. However, the changes brought about by H.R. 1 did move implementation in a different direction than was not anticipated, but we have a robust training program for our staff. Unfortunately, due to the state budget and additional cuts to programs, there is no additional funding for staffing for this. This is why we are trying to

leverage technology as much as we can, and we are advocating at the state level for more funding.

Commissioner Yam asked if DPSS could speak about some of the partnerships with DHS or general hospitals across L.A. County, since we discussed medical bills. Ms. Cheatham explained that L.A. County started working on an effort to fund a program that would support paying for medical bills. DPSS is a part of that effort, but for now, we have webinars that we've been doing since December 2025, and we have more planned as part of the implementation, including information about bringing your medical bills to the managed care partners. DHS, DMH, DPH, and Community Clinics Association are all part of the network that DPSS is doing presentations to and engaging with, so they can provide that information to their members, including retroactive MC coverage.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Yam stated that on April 7, 2026, the BOS passed a motion to continue exploring the implementation of Measure ER and noticed DPSS was a collaborator and asked if it would be possible to request that Dr. Contreras or the department come back with a director's report or an item on the agenda to get into where discussions have yielded with DHS and the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County. With the elections happening in June, that will give us less than two months to build this program. Mr. Sylvester responded that Dr. Contreras would need to look at the timeline to come back with something that is meaningful to share with the Commission, since those discussions have only started.

## **6.0 COMMISSION BUSINESS**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chair

Vice Chair ElHessen informed the Commissioners that in May, she would like to spend some time discussing the Work Plan's purpose statement and strategic goals.

## **7.0 CHAIR'S REPORT**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chair

Vice Chair ElHessen thanked everyone for congratulating her on becoming Miss Wheelchair California in 2026, which is a state title. The platform is used to support youth with disabilities in regard to knowledge and ability to use the ADA for their own advocacy and empowerment in order to create greater inclusion and equity. As Miss Wheelchair California, she will move on to Miss Wheelchair America, which will be in August. All of the states across the United States will be represented there.

## **8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chair

The meeting was adjourned by the Vice Chair at 12:57 p.m.