



SCPHA Newsletter

WINTER · SPRING 2026

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

President's Message



Saran Tucker, PhD, CPHQ, CDP

President, Southern California Public Health Association

Dear SCPHA Members and Public Health Colleagues,

As we begin 2026, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our members for your continued support and engagement with the Southern California Public Health Association. Your membership sustains our organization and strengthens our shared mission to advance public health throughout Southern California. I also want to commend the many public health practitioners, researchers, students, and community partners who continue to demonstrate unwavering commitment to improving the health and well-being of our communities.

We are navigating a particularly sensitive time for public health. Across our region and our nation, the work of public health professionals remains critically important. Now more than ever, we must remain steadfast in advocating for our communities, addressing structural barriers to health, and ensuring that equitable access to health resources remains at the center of our efforts. The dedication and resilience of the public health workforce and our community partners continue to inspire hope and progress during these challenging times.

I am pleased to share that our **2025 SCPHA Virtual Annual Conference** was a tremendous success. Held on December 5, 2025, the conference theme, *"From Neighborhoods to Nation: Mobilizing for Public Health,"* brought together public health professionals, students, and community leaders for an engaging morning of dialogue and knowledge sharing.

The conference featured sessions on public health and health systems research, behavioral and mental health, substance use, and health education and cultural studies — covering infectious disease trends, diabetes prevention, trauma-informed interventions, youth tobacco prevention, health literacy among immigrant communities, climate change education, and community-based health screening programs.

We were honored to welcome **Dr. Chris Chanyasulkit**, Past President of the American Public Health Association, as our keynote speaker. Her work across academia, public service, and national public health leadership continues to advance efforts to promote racial, gender, and health equity.

I encourage all members to explore the content included in this quarter's newsletter, which highlights important work happening across our region and within our association.



SAVE THE DATE

SCPHA Annual Conference 2026 — In Person

September 14, 2026 · California Endowment Center · Los Angeles, California

Thank you for your continued dedication to public health and for being a valued member of the SCPHA community.

Warm regards,

Saran Tucker, PhD, CPHQ, CDP

President, Southern California Public Health Association

FEATURE ARTICLE

Health Access in Action



Saran Tucker, PhD, CPHQ, CDP

President, Southern California Public Health Association

Advancing Osteoarthritis Research Through Community Partnership

Duke Orthopaedics

UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine

Boston Children's Hospital

Our team is working to support the development of new approaches to osteoarthritis (OA) care by ensuring that community perspectives help shape future plans from the very beginning. Over the past year, we have engaged with individuals and community partners across diverse populations to better understand lived experiences, priorities, and barriers related to OA care and treatment.

These insights are helping guide how we approach future research and outreach in a way that is more responsive, inclusive, and reflective of the communities most impacted. We remain committed to ongoing engagement and dialogue with community members and organizations.



Get involved or learn more

budnextgen@duke.edu

PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS

National Health Awareness Months



Loan Nguyen-Pryor, RN, MN, MPH

Member-at-Large: Membership & Section Development

MARCH

National Nutrition Month

The Power of Nutrition

March is National Nutrition Month — an annual opportunity to promote the essential role nutrition plays in lifelong health. This year's theme, "The Power of Nutrition," highlights how vital informed food choices and equitable access to nutritious options are to individual and community well-being. Nutrition influences chronic disease risk, supports healthy development, strengthens immune function, and enhances quality of life.

The power of nutrition is not just in what we eat — it's in the systems we build, the policies we shape, and the people we empower.

[↗ National Nutrition Month® Resources — Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#)

● Support Policies that Expand Food Access

- Champion policies that expand access to healthy, affordable foods in underserved communities.

● Promote Evidence-Based Nutrition Education

- Promote evidence-based nutrition education in clinical and community settings and share nutrition tips, recipes, or success stories.

● Model Healthy Behaviors

- Model healthy behaviors within the workplace and encourage staff to explore professional development opportunities related to nutrition.

● Integrate Culturally Appropriate Messaging

- Integrate culturally appropriate nutrition messaging into outreach efforts to reach diverse communities effectively.

● Strengthen Community Partnerships

- Strengthen partnerships with schools, food banks, and local organizations and highlight local nutrition programs doing meaningful work.

APRIL

National Minority Health Month

Be the Source of Better Health

April is National Minority Health Month (NMHM). This month encourages us to recommit to advancing health equity by addressing disparities affecting racial and ethnic minority communities. We can build a future where health is not determined by race, ethnicity, or ZIP code — but by increased opportunity, access, and shared well-being.

[↗ National Minority Health Month Resources \(2025\)](#)

● Strengthen Community Connections

- Engage with trusted community partners, cultural organizations, and local leaders. Host or attend community listening sessions.

● Promote Culturally Responsive Care

- Ensure programs reflect the languages, values, and realities of diverse communities. Share culturally tailored health education materials.

● Advance Data Equity

- Improve collection and use of race, ethnicity, language, and SDOH data to better identify disparities and target interventions.

● Support Prevention and Early Intervention

- Expand awareness of preventive services, screenings, and resources. Promote programs that reduce barriers to care.

● Advocate for Structural Change

- Champion policies addressing upstream drivers of health — housing, transportation, food access, environmental quality, and economic opportunity.

MAY

National Stroke Awareness Month

Taking Action on Stroke

May is National Stroke Awareness Month. Stroke remains a leading cause of death and long-term disability in the United States. Many strokes are preventable, yet persistent inequities, limited access to care, and gaps in risk-factor management continue to drive avoidable suffering.

● **Strengthen Prevention Across the Lifespan**

- Promote blood pressure control and expand access to self-monitoring. Support interventions addressing diabetes, high cholesterol, tobacco use, and physical inactivity.

● **Improve Public Recognition of Stroke Symptoms — BE FAST**

B

Balance

Sudden loss of balance

E

Eyes

Eyesight changes

F

Face

Face drooping

A

Arms

Arm weakness

S

Speech

Speech difficulty

T

Time

Call 911 immediately

● **Advance Equitable Access to Acute Stroke Care**

- Strengthen regional stroke systems including EMS protocols. Support multilingual messaging and telehealth expansion to reach underserved communities.

● **Support Survivors and Caregivers**

- Connect survivors to rehabilitation and mental health resources. Address social determinants — transportation, housing, and caregiver burden.

● **Use Data to Drive Action**

- Use registries and community assessments to identify disparities, track trends, and guide targeted interventions.

Continuing Education Opportunity

American Public Health Association (APHA) · in partnership with Climate for Health

FREE

Extreme Heat & Health: Clinical and Public Health Strategies for Prevention and Action



3 CE Credits
Upon completion



3 Hours
Self-paced, on-demand



Online
Complete anytime

As extreme heat events continue to intensify across California and beyond, public health professionals play a critical role in protecting communities — especially those most vulnerable to climate-related health risks. Extreme heat causes more deaths annually than all other weather events combined. This training provides practical tools to address one of today's deadliest climate-related threats.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand how extreme heat impacts health and worsens existing health inequities
- Identify prevention and treatment strategies for heat-related illness
- Explore community-based approaches to build climate resilience
- Strengthen communication strategies to promote evidence-based action

Ideal for: Public health professionals, clinicians, students, and community leaders seeking to strengthen capacity to respond to climate-driven health challenges. Participants also gain access to additional resources, tools, and a national network of climate health advocates.

[↗ Learn More & Enroll](#)

Federal Vaccine Guidelines



Larry Selkow, RPh, BS Pharm, FCPHA
Immediate Past President, SCPHA

States That Have Broken Away from Federal Vaccine Guidelines

In the past, clinicians have relied on federal guidelines for vaccine administration — from the Hepatitis B schedule and pneumonia vaccine recommendations to the Covid-19 vaccine schedule. These recommendations have historically been set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

- 1991** **Since 1991**
Federal recommendation: ALL newborns vaccinated for Hepatitis B within 24 hours of birth.
- 2025** **January 2025**
New administration and new HHS Secretary take office. New Hepatitis B guideline introduces the option to delay the newborn vaccine by up to 2 months — a change strongly opposed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).
- Sep** **September 2025**
The West Coast Health Alliance (WCHA) forms — California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii — to provide independent, evidence-based vaccine recommendations. A similar coalition forms in the Northeast.
- 2026** **January 2026**
HHS reduces routine childhood vaccine recommendations from 17 diseases to 11. In total, 28 states have now broken away from federal guidelines.

28

States that have broken away from federal vaccine guidelines

17 → 11

Routine childhood diseases covered under new HHS schedule

WEST COAST

West Coast Health Alliance (WCHA)

Formed September 2025 · California, Oregon, Washington & Hawaii

NORTHEAST

Northeast Coalition

Formed 2025–2026 · Northeastern states pursuing independent evidence-based guidelines

PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN

The concept of "shared clinical decision making" — a discussion with a clinician before receiving a vaccine — creates confusion, increases time burden, and reduces vaccination rates. Many Americans lack a primary care physician, making them more likely to rely on social media, TV news, and word of mouth. This increases the risk of disease outbreaks, morbidity, and mortality.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Patients and caregivers should check with their state public health department for the most up-to-date vaccine information.

Important Dates

APRIL

April 6–12, 2026

National Public Health Week

SEPTEMBER

September 14, 2026

SCPHA Annual Conference — In Person

California Endowment Center · Los Angeles, CA

NOVEMBER

November 1–4, 2026

APHA Annual Meeting

Together We Thrive: Health Across the Lifespan · San Antonio, TX