MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Protecting consumers by advancing high quality, safe medical care.

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Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California | Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency | Department of Consumer Affairs

DCA Headquarters
1625 North Market Blvd
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Thursday, May 21, 2026 - Friday, May 22, 2026

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Due to timing for invited guests to provide their presentations, the agenda items below are listed in the order they were presented.

Members Present:
Kristina D. Lawson, J.D., President
Felix C. Yip, M.D., Vice President
Veling W. Tsai, M.D., Secretary
Jacob Arkatov, J.D.
Irving Ayala-Rodriguez, M.D.
Anni Chung
Claire Holmes
Asif Mahmood, M.D.
Trinidad Solis, M.D.
Richard E. Thorp, M.D.
Gerald Tolbert, M.D.
Marina Torres, J.D.
Eserick “TJ” Watkins

Members Absent:
Luis R. Portillo

Staff Present:
Rhonda Baldo, Analyst II
Aaron Bone, Chief of Legislation and Public Affairs
Roderick Custodio, Analyst II
Sean Eichelkraut, Information Technology Manager II
Douglas Hock, Chief of Licensing
Keoni Lucas, Business Services Office Manager
Tonya Morairty, Analyst II
Mahi Nadar, Analyst II
Marina O’Connor, Deputy Director
Sharlene Smith, Chief of Enforcement
Reji Varghese, Executive Director
Kerrie Webb, Legal Counsel

Agenda Item 1 Call to Order/Roll Call/Establishment of a Quorum

Kristina D. Lawson called the meeting of the Medical Board of California (Board) to order on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 11:06 A.M. A quorum was present and due notice was provided to all interested parties.

Agenda Item 2 Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda **(Link to Video)**

Public comments on this agenda item were made by: Susanna Zaraysky, Marian Hollingsworth, and Rob Gordon.

Agenda Item 3 Approval of Minutes from February 26-27, 2026, Quarterly Board Meeting **(Link to Video)**

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Rob Gordon.

Dr. Mahmood moved to approve the minutes S:/ Dr. Ayala-Rodriquez; 13-0 (Portillo absent)

Agenda Item 4 President's Report, including notable accomplishments and priorities, and communications with interested parties **(Link to Video)**

Ms. Lawson honored Aaron Bone for 25 years of state service, highlighting his leadership as Chief of Legislation and Public Affairs and his impactful work across multiple state agencies. He received a commemorative plaque in recognition of his contributions.

Ms. Lawson delivered farewell remarks at her final Board meeting, reflecting on her decade of service, leadership through major challenges such as COVID-19, and key accomplishments including SB 815 reforms and advancing physician wellness initiatives. She thanked colleagues, partners, patient advocates, and staff, highlighted ongoing issues like how artificial intelligence (AI) will be used in medicine, telehealth, and physician shortages, and urged the Board to continue its mission of protecting Californians.

Mr. Varghese honored Ms. Lawson for her decade of leadership as Board President, highlighting her bridge-building across interested parties, her work on physician wellness reforms including AB 408, and her lasting impact on patient-centered, transparent regulation. She was presented with a plaque and certificate, with Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) leadership joining the recognition.

Christine Lally, Acting Director of DCA, offered heartfelt thanks for the Ms. Lawson's decade of service, praising her integrity, collaboration, and consistent dedication. She reflected on their shared journey since 2015, conveyed congratulations from former director Kim Kirkmeyer, and closed with deep appreciation.

Ms. Lawson announced the appointments of Dr. Solis and Ms. Holmes to the Maternal Health Task Force, which is charged with collaborating with the California Maternal

Quality Care Collaborative (CMQCC), CDPH, and other partners in support of consumer protection. Ms. Lawson thanked families and advocates for raising awareness about maternal mortality.

Regarding communications with interested parties, Ms. Lawson indicated that she received various communications that she forwarded to Board staff. No other Board members reported communications with interested parties.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen, Rob Gordon, Alex Rounds, Eric Andrist, Tracy Dominguez, and Michele Monserratt-Ramos.

Agenda Item 5 Presentation by Interstate Medical Licensure Compact – Mr. Marschall Smith, IMLCC Executive Director **(Link to Video)**

Mr. Smith, Executive Director of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Commission (IMLCC), along with Mr. Rick Masters, General Counsel, provided an overview of the Compact. Mr. Smith explained that the Compact offers an expedited, optional pathway for licensure for physicians who already hold a full, unrestricted license in a member state, while maintaining traditional state licensing authority. He noted that eligibility standards are consistent across all participating states. The presentation served as foundational information for Board members to consider in determining whether to support participating in the Compact.

Board members, staff, and Mr. Smith discussed the Compact.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen, Marian Hollingsworth, and Eric Andrist.

Agenda Item 6 Executive Management Reports **(Link to Video)**

Mr. Eichelkraut reported progress across Information Systems Branch (ISB) initiatives, including staffing, infrastructure upgrades, laptop rollout completion, and improvements to the complaint system, iOS application, and renewal projects. Key actions include preparing the Consultant Expert Management Application (CEMA) for launch, revising the Breeze complaint form, monitoring iOS application performance, advancing the outpatient surgery settings database, continuing renewal outreach and Continuing Medical Education (CME) audit automation, and reviewing the Direct Online Certification Submission (DOCS) deactivation policy. Next steps focus on finalizing CEMA, moving Phase 1 of the outpatient surgery settings database forward, and coordinating with DCA on complaint form updates while incorporating public feedback.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Marian Hollingsworth and Michele Monserratt-Ramos.

Mr. Hock provided a Licensing Program update. In Quarter Three, the program processed over 2,717 initial license applications and issued more than 1,800 licenses. Key improvements included expanded electronic signature capabilities, progress on electronic CME upload functionality, and progress on permitting midwives to apply for licensure electronically. Staff also updated procedure manuals with DCA, responded to more than 3,000 inquiries, and conducted three in-person outreach events. The call center handled over 11,500 calls with minimal wait times.

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

Ms. O'Connor presented the Enforcement Program update, with Deputy Chief Kenny Watson. Complaint initiation now averages under 10 days, and the average CCU processing times are at 158 days. Since January 2, 2025, the Complainant Liaison Unit has managed over 2,200 referrals and conducted more than 1,100 interviews with complainants. Outreach through the Expert Reviewer Program continues to expand. In the third quarter, 40 cases were closed, 16 were referred to the Attorney General's Office, and 36 licensees were placed on probation, bringing the total to 546.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Marian Hollingsworth and Michele Monserratt-Ramos.

Mr. Varghese delivered the Executive Report, noting ongoing collaboration through regular meetings with Board leadership, members, and external partners. The Board's vacancy rate rose to 6.51% but remains below the 10% threshold, with active recruitment underway. The Board maintains strong fiscal health, with stable reserves, and no outstanding debt. In communications and outreach, Mr. Varghese presented at the California Association Medical Staff Services (CAMSS) annual forum on enforcement priorities, reporting requirements, status and scope of the physician health program, and Board expectations. The Board also issued multiple licensee communications, including warnings about financial scams, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) health alerts, and administrative action notices shared through email and social media.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Monty Goddard and Michele Monserratt-Ramos.

Agenda Item 7 Updates from Department of Consumer Affairs (Link to Video)

Deputy Director Lucia Saldivar delivered the Department Update. She discussed Form 700 filings and reminded new and departing members of required deadlines. DCA has relaunched its four-day Enforcement Academy, with additional sessions planned. A new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) subcommittee has been established to support department-wide initiatives. She also reported that the agency reorganization effective July 1 will place DCA under the new Business and Consumer Services Agency. Members were encouraged to book travel early, and those in grace periods were advised to contact Member Relations if they wish to continue serving. Ms. Saldivar also thanked Ms. Lawson for her service.

Deputy Chief Stephanie Whitley provided the Health Quality Investigation Unit (HQIU) update, noting Board staff contributions, especially Rashya Henderson and Paulette

Romero, to the Enforcement Academy reboot and ongoing investigator hiring efforts amid a 20% vacancy rate. She highlighted recent trauma-informed training and continued collaboration with the Attorney General's Office to strengthen sexual misconduct investigations. HQIU has reduced its backlog of cases older than one year and maintains regular coordination with Board staff through meetings and automated updates. Deputy Chief Whitley also expressed appreciation for President Lawson's leadership.

Board members and presenters discussed the reports.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Monty Goddard.

Agenda Item 8 Discussion and Possible Action on Legislation **(Link to Video)**

AB 408 (Berman)

This is the Board's sponsored bill. This bill creates a physician health and wellness program, or PHWP, consistent with national best practices. This program would prioritize early intervention in health conditions that impair, or possibly impair, a current or future Board license from practicing in a reasonably safe, competent, and professional manner.

No action is required.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen, Sigrid Burruss, MD, Veronica Losso, MD, David Granovetter, MD, Rob Gordon, and Marian Hollingsworth.

AB 1637 (Caloza)

This bill clarifies who may edit physician records. Members discussed its impact on nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) and noted it largely codifies existing practice. A sponsor confirmed physicians will retain full accountability. The bill was amended in response to the Boards requested changes, and staff recommended a support position.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: George Osborn and Rob Gordon.

Dr. Yip moved to support the bill S:/ Dr. Tsai; 12-0 (Portillo and Watkins absent)

AB 2386 (Alvarez)

This bill would allow physicians who successfully participate in the Licensed Physicians from Mexico Program a pathway to a full and unrestricted physician's and surgeon's license and would also require the Board to issue provisional medical licenses to internationally trained physicians (ITPs) who have not completed ACGME approved training. This bill would provide such ITPs with a pathway to a full and unrestricted physician's and surgeon's license. The Board considered a staff recommendation to oppose this bill unless amended. Among other concerns, the proposal provides a licensing pathway for internationally trained physicians who do not qualify under existing routes, raising concerns about non-ACGME training equivalency. Members and staff also discussed challenges physicians licensed under this pathway may have with long-term integration into health systems, including credentialing and reimbursement. Staff recommended the Board take an oppose position unless amended, including, but not limited to, changing the ITP portion of the bill into a study bill on alternative licensure pathways.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Navreen Randhawa, Elan Shapiro, MD, Andrea Amavisca, Lawson Mansell, McKay Carney, Mike Zimmer, and Rosa Vivian Fernandez.

Dr. Thorp moved to oppose the bill unless amended as recommended by staff. S:/ Dr. Yip; 12 (, Portillo and Watkins absent)

AB 1979 (Bonta)

This bill states that a health facility, clinic, physician's office, or office of a group practice shall do the following: 1) ensure that no clinical decision is based solely on the output of a clinical decision support system; 2) ensure that a licensed health care professional exercises independent professional judgment when reviewing and approving a clinical decision that is based on the output of a clinical decision support system; 3) not use or deploy a tool, system, or device that includes artificial intelligence (AI) to direct, guide, supervise, or instruct unlicensed personnel in performing any function that requires a professional license.

Further, the bill subjects a healthcare chatbot, as defined, to the provisions of the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act (CMIA). Members noted AI is already embedded in clinical practice and the bill's intent is to ensure human oversight, but concerns remain about overly rigid rules and unclear language. Major healthcare organizations oppose the bill, arguing it could hinder safe, widely used tools. Members agreed more information and future discussions are needed.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Rob Gordon.

No action was taken.

AB 2311 (Schiavo)

This bill would allow, until January 1, 2037, general acute care hospitals owned or controlled by a health care district to directly employ physicians and surgeons and charge for their professional services, under certain conditions. It would require hospitals that hire physicians with this authority to publish certain reports online on an annual basis Supporters of the bill argue this bill would improve recruitment in underserved areas, but Board members raised strong concerns about administrative influence, cost-driven pressures, and risks to physician independence.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen.

Dr. Yip moved to Oppose the bill Dr. Mahmood; 12-0 (Portillo and Watkins absent)

AB 2497 (Johnson)

This bill updates various terms, including the scope of practice of physical therapy, and, among other things, removes limitations on patient visits to a physical therapist (PT) without authorization from a physician or podiatrist (referred to as direct patient access). Members were divided: some emphasized PT training and improved access, while others warned of risks from eliminating physician evaluation. The Board remained supportive of other elements of the bill but opposed removing the direct-access limit.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen.

Dr. Tsai made a motion to oppose unless amended to maintain current law with respect to patient direct access. S:/ Dr. Mahmood; 7 approved, 3 opposed (Thorp, Tolbert, and Torres) & 2 abstained (Holmes and Yip) (Portillo and Watkins absent)

AB 2575 (Ortega)

This bill states that a health facility, clinic, physician's office, or office of a group practice that uses or deploys a clinical decision support system for patient care shall provide a written notice, as specified, to any licensed health care professional or other person using or viewing the outputs of that system. Notices must be given at hiring or credentialing, and at least 90 days before deploying new systems or major updates, with the first disclosure due February 1, 2028, and annually thereafter. Further, this bill prohibits an employer from retaliating or discriminating against a worker providing direct patient care based solely on the worker's override of, or reliance on, the output of a clinical decision support system. A defendant in a lawsuit who developed or used a clinical decision support system that is alleged to have caused harm would generally be prohibited from asserting that they are not liable for that harm due to the failure of a health care provider to override the output of the clinical decision support system. Board staff did not recommend a position on this bill.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen.

No board position was taken.

SB 903 (Padilla)

This prohibits offering psychotherapy services, including through AI, unless conducted by a licensed health care professional, as defined. Further, the bill establishes restrictions on the use of AI by licensed health care professionals in their practice, as specified. The bill provides state licensing boards with the authority to take enforcement actions due to violations.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen, Eric Andrist, and Rob Gordon

No board position was taken.

SB 1146 (Gonzalez)

This bill requires clear disclosure when AI-generated or altered depictions of health care professionals are used in health-related advertising. The bill aims to increase transparency and prevent misuse of a provider's image or voice. Enforcement authority extends to the Attorney General, local prosecutors, affected individuals, and the Board when a licensee is involved. Staff recommended a support position.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen.

Dr. Tsai moved to support the bill S:/ Dr. Ayala-Rodriguez; 12-0 (Portillo and Watkins absent)

SB 1271 (Reyes)

This bill requires the board to update its demographic survey for licensed midwives to include a question about eligibility and availability to serve as a clinical preceptor—individuals who train and educate student midwives. The original draft mandates implementation by January 1, 2027, but board staff recommend amending the deadline to April 1, 2027, due to existing IT project constraints. Staff also suggest emailing licensees upon survey completion to encourage prompt participation.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Gabrielle Brown, Esperanza Mendez, Sarah Tunney, and Rob Gordon.

Dr. Tsai moved to support the bill if amended as requested by staff S:/ Ms. Holmes; 12-0 (Portillo and Watkins absent)

SB 1311 (Wahab)

This bill, in pertinent part, updates the Physicians from Mexico Program. The measure extends the application deadline from December 31, 2025, to July 1, 2026, without increasing the number of available licenses. It also fixes a drafting error in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) requirement by removing the word "percent," ensuring applicants with a score of 85/120 are evaluated correctly.

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

Dr. Thorp moved to support the bill S:/ Dr. Yip; 12-0 (Portillo and Watkins absent)

Kristina D. Lawson adjourned the meeting at 5:19 P.M.

RECESS

Friday, May 22, 2026, Day 2 **(Link to Video)**

Due to timing for invited guests to provide their presentations, the agenda items below are listed in the order they were presented.

Members Present:
Kristina D. Lawson, J.D., President
Felix C. Yip, M.D., Vice President
Veling W. Tsai, M.D., Secretary
Irving Ayala-Rodriguez, M.D.
Anni Chung
Claire Holmes
Asif Mahmood, M.D.
Trinidad Solis, M.D.
Richard E. Thorp, M.D.
Gerald Tolbert, M.D.
Marina Torres, J.D.
Eserick "TJ" Watkins

Members Absent:
Jacob Arkatov, J.D.
Luis R. Portillo

Staff Present:
Rhonda Baldo, Analyst II
Aaron Bone, Chief of Legislation and Public Affairs
Roderick Custodio, Analyst II
Sean Eichelkraut, Information Technology Manager II
Douglas Hock, Chief of Licensing
Keoni Lucas, Business Services Office Manager
Tonya Morairty, Analyst II
Mahi Nadar, Analyst II
Marina O'Connor, Deputy Director
Sharlene Smith, Chief of Enforcement
Reji Varghese, Executive Director
Kerrie Webb, Legal Counsel

Agenda Item 9 Call to Order/Roll Call/Establishment of a Quorum

Kristina D. Lawson called the meeting of the Medical Board of California (Board) to order on Friday, May 22, 2026, at 09:03 A.M. A quorum was present and due notice was provided to all interested parties.

Agenda Item 10 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Supplement Strategic Planning Session **(Link to Video)**

Tricia St. Clair and Sara Irani from DCA's Solid Planning Team provided an update on integrating diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) priorities into the strategic plan, consistent with the Governor's Executive Order N-16-22. The session focused only on pending DEIA items, with a full strategic plan update scheduled for a future Board meeting. The updated strategic plan will be active through 2029.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen and Eric Andrist.

The plan was adopted by consensus (Arkatov, Portillo, and Watkins absent)

Agenda Item 11 Discussion and Possible Action on the Legislative Analyst's Office's (LAO) Recommendation for Physician Licensure Exemptions described in the LAO's report on "Addressing Chronic Vacancies in Prison Mental Health Care" **(Link to Video)**

The Board reviewed the LAO's proposal to allow out-of-state mental health providers to work in California prisons without state licensure. Members strongly opposed removing licensure due to lost oversight, inconsistent standards, and accountability concerns, and worried it could open the door to broader deregulation. The Board directed staff to send an opposition letter to the LAO and legislators while expressing willingness to collaborate on safer approaches.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen and George Osborn.

Dr. Thorp moved to oppose LAO's recommendation to hire physicians not licensed in CA to provide care to CA prisoners S:/ Dr. Mahmood; 11-0 (Ms. Lawson recused herself; Arkatov and Portillo absent)

Agenda Item 12 Update from the Physician Assistant Board **(Link to Video)**

Dr. Tsai reported that the PA Board reported ongoing recruitment for vacant public seats and licensing operations. Complaint and investigation activity remains within normal ranges, with some cases resulting in probation or diversion. The PA Board approved a new re-entry policy requiring returning retirees to recertify, with a full reapplication required after extended retirement. The next meeting will be held in August in San Diego.

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 13 Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendations from the Special Faculty Permit Review Committee **(Link to Video)**

Dr. Ayala-Rodriguez reported that Dr. Mohamed Soleimani and Dr. Marcelo Rodriguez were recommended for special faculty permits based on their extensive clinical, academic, and leadership experience. Dr. Soleimani, an internationally recognized cornea surgeon-scientist recruited by USC, and Dr. Rodriguez, a leading musculoskeletal radiologist recruited by UCSD, both met the qualifications for appointment.

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

Dr. Yip moved to approve issuing special faculty permits to Dr. Soleimani and Dr. Rodriguez S:/ Dr. Mahmood; 12-0 (Arkatov and Portillo absent)

Agenda Item 14 Discussion and Possible Action Related to the Midwifery Advisory Council (MAC), including a Report from the last MAC meeting, a Request to Extend the terms of two MAC Members, and Approval of Agenda Items for the next MAC meeting **(Link to Video)**

MAC Chair Madeline Wisner reported that she and member Mason Wilson-Tanev request that their terms be extended until new members are appointed to fill their positions.

Ms. Wisner requested approval for the September 17, 2026, MAC meeting agenda, which includes:

- Approval of April 16, 2026, minutes
- Chair's report
- Legislative and program updates
- Licensed midwife annual report
- Vote on 2027 meeting dates
- Selection of three new MAC members (two licensed midwives, one licensed physician)
- Presentation on the Board's enforcement process

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

Dr. Ayala-Rodriquez moved to approve the requested action to extend the service of Ms. Wisner and Ms. Wilson-Tanev and to approve the requested agenda items for the MAC S:/ Dr. Tsai; 12-0 (Arkatov and Portillo absent)

Ms. Wisner also asked the Board for a future agenda item on midwifery care.

Agenda Item 15 Discussion and Possible Action to Designate the Decision In the Matter of the Petition for Reinstatement of John Edward Massey (Case Number 800-2023-103888) as a Precedential Decision **(Link to Video)**

Ms. Webb reported that John Edward Massey's license was revoked in 2019 for sexual misconduct under Business and Professions Code (BPC) section 726. AB 1636 (Weber, Chapter 453, statutes of 2022) became effective on January 1, 2023, and bars reinstatement in such cases. Massey sought reinstatement in November 2023.The administrative law judge (ALJ) found the law applies prospectively to bar his petition for reinstatement submitted after AB 1636 became effective, that Massey has no protected property interest in a revoked license and dismissed the petition for lack of jurisdiction. The Board adopted the proposed decision issued by the ALJ. While Massey filed a writ, he dismissed it before going to hearing, and the decision is final. Staff recommend designating the Issue, Factual Findings 1-13, and Legal Conclusions 1-8, and 10-17 as precedential (with Legal Conclusion 9 redacted) to promote consistency, reduce repetitive litigation, and conserve resources.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Lucas Evensen

Dr. Thorp moved to approve the specified sections of the Massey decision as precedential S:/ Dr. Mahmood; 12-0 (Arkatov and Portillo absent)

Agenda Item 16 Officer Elections **(Link to Video)**

Nominations opened for president, vice president, and secretary. Dr. Thorp nominated Dr. Yip (President), Dr. Tsai (Vice President), and Ms. Torres (Secretary), with their terms to begin immediately upon Ms. Lawson's term ending on or before July 30, 2026.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Eric Andrist and Michele Monserratt-Ramos.

S:/ Dr. Tolbert; 11-1 (Dr. Ayala-Rodriquez Abstained; Arkatov and Portillo absent)

Agenda Item 17 Future Agenda Items **(Link to Video)**

Dr. Yip suggested holding at least one meeting per year on a Saturday to increase public accessibility.

Mr. Watkins requested a briefing from the Attorney General regarding physicians disciplined in California who leave the state, practice elsewhere without issues, and later return seeking reinstatement, creating a potential accountability gap.

Dr. Tolbert requested a presentation on improving access to care for at-risk communities.

Dr. Thorp and Dr. Ayala-Rodriguez would like AI to be a consistent agenda item.

Ms. Holmes suggested organizing AI topics (e.g., practice management, diversity and inclusion in AI) and reiterated the need to revisit maternal mortality.

Ms. Torres requested expanded discussion on mental health and health care resources for individuals in CDCR custody.

Dr. Tsai supported a presentation requested by the Midwifery Advisory Council, noting licensed midwives as a key resource for expanding access to care.

Public comments on this agenda were made by: Eric Andrist and Michele Monserratt-Ramos.

Agenda Item 18 Adjournment