



# 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

## Huntington Memorial Hospital

100 W. California Blvd

Pasadena, CA 91105

Thursday, February 26, 2026- Friday, February 27, 2026

## MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday, February 26, 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.

Luis R. Portillo

Trinidad Solis, M.D.

Gerald Tolbert, M.D.

Marina Torres, J.D.

Eserick "TJ" Watkins

### **Members Absent:**

Richard E. Thorp, M.D.

### **Staff Present:**

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

Marina O'Connor, Deputy Director

Sharlene Smith, Chief of Enforcement

Angelaya Strother, Analyst II

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, February 26, 2026 at 12:32 P.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:](#) Wendy Knecht, Susanna Zaraysky, Marian Hollingsworth, Rob Gordon, Renee Alvarado and Eric Andrist.

**Agenda Item 3      Approval of Minutes from the December 4-5, 2025 Quarterly Board Meeting ([Link to Video](#))**

**Dr. Tsai moved to approve the minutes S:/ Dr. Mahmood, 12-0-1 (Mr. Portillo Abstained)**

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

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

Ms. Lawson thanked Jodi Remke for her service to the Board. She welcomed new Board members Claire Holmes and Luis Portillo to the Board.

Ms. Holmes and Mr. Portillo thanked the Board and expressed that it is a privilege to serve the Board.

Regarding communications with interested parties, Ms. Lawson did not have a specific interested party's report to make but stated that she has continued to receive communications that she forwards to Board staff for a response.

Dr. Mahmood stated that he spoke with people regarding new legislation.

Mr. Watkins stated that he spoke with patient advocates, NBC, and other stakeholders.

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 5      Presentation: A Regulator's Perspective on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Healthcare – Frank Meyers, J.D., Director, Regulatory Innovation & Member Services, Federation of State Medical Boards ([Link to Video](#))**

Ms. Lawson introduced Frank Meyers, who is an attorney and the director of regulatory innovation and member services at the Federation of State Medical Boards.

Mr. Meyers provided an in-depth overview of the evolving role of artificial intelligence in healthcare, outlining the current AI landscape and the rapid growth of related

technologies across the medical field. He discussed the emerging regulatory frameworks designed to ensure safe and ethical implementation, with particular attention to developments occurring within Utah. Mr. Meyers also addressed the implications of AI adoption for state medical boards, including oversight responsibilities, enforcement considerations, and the need for updated policies to guide professional conduct. Additionally, he highlighted the work of the FSMB's Office of AI Innovation, emphasizing its efforts to support states, promote responsible integration of AI tools, and prepare regulatory bodies for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Lucas Evensen, Rob Gordon, Eric Andrist, and Dr. Cassandra White.

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

Mr. Eichelkraut provided the technology update including on, among other things, staffing, infrastructure, software, complaint tracking system, iOS application, Consultant Expert Management Application (CEMA), the Direct Online Certification Submission (DOCS), Volunteer Physician Registry, the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) Survey, BreEZe online complaint form, electronic renewal process, wallet card license generator, and the continuing medical education auditing enhancement.

Mr. Hock provided a Licensing Program update, including on, among other things, licensing statistics, form updates, process improvements, webmaster inquiries, outreach, and the Consumer Information Unit.

Ms. Smith provided the Enforcement Program summary and provided updates on, among other things, the Central Complaint Unit, Complainant Liaison Unit, Expert Review Program, Complaint investigation Office, the Disciplinary Coordination Unit, and the Probation Unit.

Mr. Varghese provided an administrative summary, including updates on, among other things, staffing and the vacancy rate. He reported that the vacancy rate is 4.35%, which equates to eight vacant positions.

Mr. Varghese proceeded with the budget update and stated the Board is in a strong and stable position and expected to maintain a three-month reserve at the end of the fiscal year. All loans have been repaid; therefore, the Board is debt free.

Mr. Varghese also provided an update on media relations and external communications.

Mr. Varghese proceeded with the strategic plan update which included the progress that the Board has made, such as operation improvements and stakeholder engagement.

Board members and staff discussed the Executive Management Reports.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Michele Monserratt-Ramos, Eric Andrist, Marian Hollingsworth, and Maria Ibarra-Navarrette.

**Agenda Item 7 Discussion on Maternal Mortality Data and Outcomes ([Link to Video](#))**

Sharlene Smith provided information on maternal mortality data. She discussed data from complaints that were received for fiscal years (FY) 22/23, 23/24, and 24/25, as well as for complaints closed during those same FYs for physicians and surgeons with specialties in internal medicine, family medicine, emergency medicine, surgery, obstetrics, gynecology, neonatology/perinatology and licensed midwives.

Board members and staff discussed the data.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Michele - Monserratt-Ramos, Kimberly Turbin, Rob Gordon, Eric Andrist, Monique Himes, Dylan Izadseta, Marian Hollingsworth, Denise Johnson, Maria Ibarra-Navarrette, Tracy Dominguez, Alex Dominguez, Xavier Deleon, and Naomi.

**Agenda Item 9 Discussion and Possible Action on Legislation**

Day 1 ([Link to Video](#))

**AB 1637**

Adds a new law to the Medical Practice Act to state that a physician's medical document is the responsibility of that physician and that the physician's patient notes, after-visit summaries, and diagnosis and treatment plans shall not be changed by anyone other than the authoring physician.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

**Dr. Tsai moved to support the bill, if amended S:/ Dr. Ayala-Rodriguez, 12-0-1 (Dr. Mahmood Abstained)**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) George Osborn and Rob Gordon.

**AB 408**

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.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Lucas Evensen, Michele Monserratt-Ramos, Kimberly Turbin, Rob Gordon, Daniel Blaney-Koen, Cheryl Marcell, Dylan Elliot, Lizzie Guansona, Monique Himes, Denise Johnson, Maria Ibarra-

Navarrette, Dr. Malini Madanahali, Tracy Dominguez, Dr. Edwin Kim, Dr. Shannon Udovic-Constant, and Eric Andrist.

**AB 1587**

Authorizes a pharmacist to provide up to a 30-day supply for a prescription drug for a life-threatening condition, as defined, if the pharmacy, or another pharmacy under common control with the pharmacy, has previously furnished that drug to the patient and the patient is unable to secure a new prescription for the drug before their supply is exhausted. States that the pharmacist or pharmacy shall not incur any liability for dispensing a medication pursuant to this legislation.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

**Dr. Mahmood moved to approve staff recommendation to not take a position on the bill, and to write a letter encouraging the author to collaborate with the Board of Pharmacy and to address concerns with the liability shield S:/ Dr. Tsai, 13-0**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Rob Gordon and Adam Bowman.

**AB 1598**

This bill includes language that could prevent a physician from using the words “psychosocial” or “psychotherapy” when using any title or description of their services available to the public.

**Dr. Tsai moved to approve staff recommendation to not take a position on this bill and to continue to collaborate with the author’s office and the Board of Behavioral Sciences to resolve concerns and report back at the next meeting S:/ Dr. Tolbert, 12-0 (Watkins absent)**

No public comments were made on this agenda item

**Proposed Tracker Bill Language on Menopause Coverage**

This bill authorizes a qualifying physician, as defined, who completes continuing medical education (CME) courses in perimenopause, menopause, and postmenopausal care, who shall receive two hours of credit for each hour completed, up to a maximum of eight course hours, toward their CME renewal requirements.

**Dr. Tsai moved to support the bill S:/ Dr. Yip, 11-0 (Mahmood and Watkins absent)**

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

**Kristina D. Lawson adjourned the meeting at 5:27 P.M.**

**RECESS**

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**Friday, February 27, 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  
Jacob Arkatov, J.D.  
Irving Ayala-Rodriguez, M.D.  
Anni Chung  
Claire Holmes  
Asif Mahmood, M.D.  
Luis R. Portillo  
Trinidad Solis, M.D.  
Gerald Tolbert, M.D.  
Marina Torres, J.D.  
Eserick "TJ" Watkins

**Members Absent:**

Richard E. Thorp, M.D.

**Staff Present:**

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  
Marina O'Connor, Deputy Director  
Sharlene Smith, Chief of Enforcement  
Angelaya Strother, Analyst II  
Reji Varghese, Executive Director  
Kerrie Webb, Legal Counsel

**Agenda Item 10 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, February 27, 2026 at 9:04 A.M. A quorum was present and due notice was provided to all interested parties.

**Agenda Item 12 Discussion and Possible Action Related to the Midwifery Advisory Council (MAC), including a Report from the Last MAC Meeting, and Approval of Agenda Items for the Next MAC Meeting ([Link to Video](#))**

Madeleine Wisner provided an update on the previous MAC meeting which was cancelled due to lack of quorum. Ms. Wisner requested that the Board approve an

additional agenda item to the list of previously approved items regarding the selection of three candidates to fill the open positions on the MAC.

**Dr. Tsai moved to approve the requested agenda item S:/ Dr. Mahmood, 13-0**

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 9      Discussion and Possible Action on Legislation (Continued) [\(Link to Video\)](#)**

**AB 1558**

Enacts the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act (UEVHPA), which, among other provisions, authorizes establishing volunteer registration systems by certain entities. Further, authorizes a health care licensing board to impose administrative sanctions upon a health practitioner licensed in this state for conduct outside of this state in response to an out-of-state emergency, and to impose administrative sanctions upon a practitioner not licensed in this state for conduct in this state in response to an in-state emergency, as specified.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

**Dr. Mahmood moved to approve staff recommendation to not take a position, provide the staff's comments to the author and sponsor, gather additional information and report back at the next Board meeting S:/ Dr. Tsai, 13-0**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Rob Gordon.

**SB 849**

Requires the Medical Board of California (Board) to automatically revoke a license held by a licensee who was previously revoked by the Board for specified acts of sexual misconduct with a current or former patient or client or due to a conviction of specified criminal sexual acts and their license was reinstated by the Board on or after January 1, 2020.

Board members and staff discussed this bill.

**Dr. Mahmood moved to approve staff recommendation of support if amended to replace the current language in the bill with staff's proposed language S:/ Dr. Yip, 13-0**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Lucas Evensen, Rob Gordon, Eric Andrist, and Marian Hollingsworth.

**SB 903**

Prohibits organizations and non-licensed professionals from providing or offering therapy or psychotherapy services, including through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as defined. Limits the authorized use of AI by a licensed professional engaged in therapy or psychotherapy services. Grants authority to the Department of Consumer

Affairs (DCA) to investigate violations and issue a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 per violation.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

No action was taken.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Rob Gordon and Tyler Rinde.

**SB 1002**

Expands the existing exemption that allows certain out-of-state physicians to treat a California patient, via telehealth, who has a disease or condition that is immediately life-threatening without obtaining a California medical license. Under this bill, a patient could continue to see the same physician if their immediately life-threatening disease or condition is in remission.

Board members and staff discussed this bill.

**Dr. Mahmood moved to oppose this bill S:/ Dr. Tsai 12-0 (Torres absent)**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Eric Andrist, Robin Klau, Gene Dorio, and Wendy Knecht.

**Agenda Item 15      Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendations from the Special Faculty Permit Review Committee ([Link to Video](#))**

Dr. Ayala-Rodriguez discussed that on December 10, 2025, the Special Faculty Permit Review Committee (SFPRC) held a meeting to consider candidates for the Special Faculty appointments. Dr. Ayala-Rodriguez presented on Dr. Kwon for a Special Faculty Permit appointment at Cedar- Sinai Medical Center (CSMC) and Dr. Yahagi for a Special Faculty Permit appointment at Stanford University School of Medicine.

**Dr. Yip moved to approve the Special Faculty Permit appointments for Dr. Kwon and Dr. Yahagi, S:/ Dr. Tsai, 12-0 (Torres absent)**

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 16      Presentation on the Role of the Department of Consumer Affairs' Health Quality Investigation Unit in the Board's Enforcement Process ([Link to Video](#))**

Stephanie Whitley provided an overview of the Health Quality Investigation Unit (HQIU), covering its mission and organizational background, the HQIU Expert Procurement Unit (EPU), the referral process, and statistics. She also addressed investigator training and reviewed the operational timeline. improvement strategies and future goals.

Board members, Ms. Whitley, and staff discussed the presentation.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Marcus Friedman, Monty Goddard, Marian Hollingsworth, and Rob Gordon.

**Agenda Item 17 Presentation on the Role of the Attorney General Office's Health Quality Enforcement Unit in the Board's Enforcement Process ([Link to Video](#))**

Gloria Castro provided an overview of the Attorney General's Office and the Health Quality Enforcement Unit, highlighting their roles in enforcement matters and briefly outlining the timeline and outcomes. She also explained the key role of the administrative hearing process and the rights offered to the accused licensee.

Board members and Ms. Castro discussed the presentation.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Wendy Knecht, Marcus Friedman, Monty Goddard, Eric Andrist, Rob Gordon, and Marian Hollingsworth.

**Agenda Item 11 Updates from External Stakeholders ([Link to Video](#))**

Lucia Saldivar, from the Board and Bureau Relations for Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), welcomed Mr. Portillo and Ms. Holmes to the Board.

Among other updates, she stated that Christine Lally has been named Acting Director of DCA, and discussed the executive order by Governor Newsom on postponement of license renewals for people effected by the Los Angeles fires, the Governor's state budget proposal, the Governor's reorganization plan pertaining to the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency, DCA work groups, travel requirements, form 700 obligations, and required trainings for Board members.

Stephanie Whitley provided the HQIU update. Among other information, Ms. Whitley discussed the HQIU medical consultants' biannual statewide meeting, the internal training academy, training courses, and the progress in reducing pending caseloads.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Monty Goddard.

**Agenda Item 13 Presentation on the Licensed Midwifery Fund ([Link to Video](#))**

Marina O'Connor provided an update on the licensed midwifery fund. She discussed that the Board oversees licensing, cashing, and enforcement functions for the Licensed Midwifery Program, but the fund has remained structurally imbalanced because expenditures have consistently exceeded revenues. She shared what the fund will look like if there is no fee increase and compared it to what the fund would look like with a fee increase.

Board members and staff discussed the report.

No public comments were made on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 14 Update from the Physician Assistant Board ([Link to Video](#))**

Dr. Tsai reported on the Physician Assistant Board meetings held in November 2025 and February 2026. He reported that during the November Board meeting the PAB highlighted the adoption of the sunset bill, new project to review and revise the practice agreement between PAs and physicians, the election of President Vasco Deon Kidd and Vice President Diego Inzunza, licensing statistics. In addition, he reported on the recent meeting, which discussed the effects of the “Big Beautiful Bill,” which impacts PA students who need loans, licensing statistics, processing times for applications, complaints received, probation data, and the Professional Practice Agreements PA Modernization Act.

Board members discussed the report.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Rob Gordon.

**Agenda Item 8 Discussion on December 17, 2025, Joint Forum on Controlled Substances and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Access ([Link to Video](#))**

Mr. Varghese provided an update from the Joint Forum. He stated that the forum focused on improving collaboration and understanding around access to controlled substances and was held on December 17, 2025. It was organized by the Medical Board in partnership with the California State Board of Pharmacy, Osteopathic Medical Board, Board of Registered Nursing, Dental Board, Physician Assistant Board, and other key agencies. Ms. Lawson provided an opening statement for the event. The forum included presentations, a panel discussion, and breakout sessions aimed at identifying ways health care providers can better work together to enhance patient care. The outcomes from these sessions are now being reviewed to determine the next actionable steps. Breakout discussions highlighted recurring themes such as communication and collaboration gaps, challenges relating to prescribing practices and regulatory the patient access issues and stigma, and broader systemic and policy deficiencies. Participants also identified specific operational barriers, including prescribing difficulties, pharmacy thresholds, drug shortages, insurance coverage limitations, and the need for improved patient education. Overall, the forum emphasized the need for stronger interdisciplinary communication, enhanced prescriber education, a more patient-centered approach, and systemic reforms to streamline access and reduce administrative burdens to improve pain management and patient outcomes.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Lucas Evensen and Monty Goddard.

**Agenda Item 18 Future Agenda Items ([Link to Video](#))**

Dr. Yip requested a review of the surgery center accreditation survey outcome and the mortality report.

Mr. Watkins requested a notice to the public for doctors under investigation.

Dr. Tsai requested a presentation on the interstate compact.

Dr. Ayala-Rodriguez requested a presentation on AI monitoring, a presentation on probation compliance, and maternal infant mortality.

Ms. Torres requested a presentation on maternal mortality.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Ulemic Fursen, Rob Gordon, and Michele Monserratt-Ramos.

**Agenda Item 19    Adjournment**

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Signature on File</u>            | <u>May 21, 2026</u> |
| Kristina D. Lawson, J.D., President | Date                |

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| <u>Signature on File</u>     | <u>May 21, 2026</u> |
| Veling Tsai, M.D., Secretary | Date                |

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Signature on File</u>          | <u>May 21, 2026</u> |
| Reji Varghese, Executive Director | Date                |