

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Week of March 4, 2019

## State Issues

Governor Newsom Appoints New Secretary of Health and Human Services Agency

On Thursday, Governor Gavin Newsom appointed practicing pediatrician and current Director of Health and Social Impact for Los Angeles County, Mark Ghaly, as his Secretary for the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS). As both a physician and an expert in public health, Newsom states that Dr. Ghaly brings a deep knowledge and understanding of how individual and community health outcomes intersect with policy and law on issues like whole-person care, mental health and stage of life care. He will help lead the Administration's efforts to advance the Governor's health care agenda, including proposals to lower prescription drug costs, provide coverage to young undocumented adults through Medi-Cal, and help put California on a path toward single-payer health care.

Dr. Ghaly has served as Director of Health and Social Impact for Los Angeles County since 2018. He was deputy director of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services overseeing community health and integrated programs from 2011 to 2018 and medical director for the Southeast Health Center, a San Francisco Department of Public Health clinic, from 2006 to 2011. Ghaly earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from Harvard Medical School and a Master of Public Health degree in health policy from the Harvard School of Public Health.

The Governor also announced the reappointment of Michelle Baass as undersecretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, where she has served as undersecretary since 2018 and was deputy secretary of the Office of Program and Fiscal Affairs from 2017 to 2018. Many in the health community have worked with Baass in her role as Deputy Director for the California State Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review from 2016 to 2017, where she was Principal Consultant from 2012 to 2016. Previously, she was deputy director for the California State Senate Office of Research from 2011 to 2012, where she was Principal Consultant from 2008 to 2011. She was a senior fiscal and policy analyst at the California Legislative Analyst's Office from 2004 to 2008 and a manager and consultant for Accenture from 1996 to 2004.

The California Health and Human Services Agency oversees 12 departments and four offices that provide a range of health care services, social services, mental health services, alcohol and drug services, income assistance, and public health services to Californians. More than 33,000 people work for departments in CHHS at state headquarters in Sacramento, regional offices throughout the state, state institutions and residential facilities serving the mentally ill and people with developmental disabilities.

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<p>New Select Committee on Social Determinants of Children's Well-Being</p>	<p>Last month, the Senate created a new Select Committee focused on the social determinants of health – the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Science is increasingly showing that children's well-being, in particular, is linked to their social determinants. As an example, nearly a quarter of young children in California live in poverty – a fact that has profound educational, health, and economic repercussions now and in the long term in that they create inequities that could be mitigated. The Committee is looking at people from birth through age 26.</p> <p>The bipartisan Select Committee members will hold a series of informational hearings that focus on the specific social determinants of health that drive negative outcomes, such as housing and homelessness, access to health care, immigration status, poverty and the safety net, land use, and education. The Committee seeks to understand challenges in the current systems with the various determinants and consider ways to improve outcomes for children.</p> <p>Interestingly, the Select Committee has decided to have a geographic focus which includes areas of high poverty rates in the state: Los Angeles, the San Joaquin Valley, the Inland Empire, the Central Coast, and Northern Border/Tribal Lands. They are clear, though, that this geographic focus is not exclusive of their work.</p> <p>The Committee is set to be active throughout the two-year session and all recommendations will be posted on their website. They held a rally to kick off the Select Committee this week, featuring a special address by labor rights leader Dolores Huerta, and with a focus on the communities in the San Joaquin Valley.</p> <p>The members of the Committee are Senators: Chair, Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles); Patricia Bates (R-Laguna Niguel); Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger); Bill Monning (D-Carmel); Richard Pan (D-Sacramento); and Susan Rubio (D-West Covina).</p>
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