Legislative Update

Week of August 17, 2026

Alliance of Catholic Health Care

State Issues	
California Legislative Black Caucus Elects Leadership	The California Legislative Black Caucus announced its incoming executive leadership team for the 2027-28 legislative session. The members of the Caucus have elected: • Vice Chair-elect: Senate Assistant Majority Leader Laura Richardson (D-South Bay) • Secretary-elect: Assembly Assistant Majority Leader LaShae Sharp-Collins, Ed.D. (D-San Diego) • Treasurer-elect: Assemblymember Mia Bonta (D-Alameda) The outgoing chair is Senator Dr. Akilah Weber Pierson, who noted, "Serving as chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus has been an incredible honor. I am proud of the difference we have made not only through legislation, but by showing up in our communities and creating meaningful change for Black Californians. As I pass the gavel to our new leadership at the end of this year, I do so with great confidence in their vision, commitment, and ability to carry this work forward. The Caucus is in excellent hands, and I look forward to all that will be accomplished in this next chapter." Over the last few years, the Legislative Black Caucus has focused on developing policies that address reparations and remediations for slavery. They developed a "Road to Repair" bill package that sought to level the playing field and "widen access for the descendants of formerly enslaved people in our state by providing mechanisms to verify descendancy and access supports." Dr. Weber Pierson noted, "Institutional harm requires institutional repair."
New program to Provide Asthma Inhalers to Schools	This week, Governor Newsom announced a program that will provide free asthma medication to 10,000 public and charter schools and Transitional Kindergarten programs. Through the Governor's CalRx initiative, the state is partnering with New Jersey-based Amneal Pharmaceuticals to launch the School Albuterol Access Initiative. The initiative will establish a statewide system for supplying public and charter schools with emergency albuterol inhalers and spacers at no cost for three years. Each participating school will receive emergency supplies annually for three years, which will include two albuterol metered-dose inhalers delivering 90 micrograms per actuation and twenty-five single-use disposable spacers. Private schools may purchase inhalers for $9.50 each. All schools may purchase additional refills at the same CalRx® price. According to the California Department of Health Care Access and Information, approximately 1 million children in California have asthma. Among children with active symptoms, one in three misses at least a week of school each year. Asthma remains one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. *(more)*

New program to Provide Asthma Inhalers to Schools *(continued)*	To support implementation, CalRx® is partnering with the California School Nurses Organization to provide public school districts with free training guidelines on asthma response and stock albuterol. The training covers recognizing signs of respiratory distress, how to use an albuterol inhaler during an emergency in an educational setting, and calling 911 and notifying parents or guardians after an incident. The California Department of Public Health and CalRx® will host a statewide webinar on August 25, 2026, for California's TK–12 school community. The webinar will explain the initiative and how schools can access the free products. As part of that mechanism for streamlining access to these medications, a statewide albuterol standing order, signed by Dr. Erica Pan, CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer, is available for school use. This eliminates the need for schools to obtain an individual physician's prescription. Amneal will launch an ordering system that allows products to be shipped directly to school districts or individual school sites under the statewide standing order. After the initial three-year period, schools will continue to have access to the system and may order products directly from Amneal. The program's structure and implementation are similar to the Governor's diaper initiative announced earlier this year. For more information, visit the **CDPH website** or email SafeSchoolsTeam@cdph.ca.gov.
Sales and Use Tax on Software	This year, the Governor's Budget included a tax on software. Specifically, this new law expands the state sales and use tax to prewritten computer software delivered electronically or accessed remotely as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), effective January 1, 2027. When the new law takes effect, the total tax rate will be the 7.25% statewide base rate plus local district taxes, which vary by the buyer's location. Because local jurisdictions can add district taxes, the combined sales tax rate ranges from 7.25% to 11.25% across the state. The combined sales tax rate in the city of San Bernardino is 8.75%. The tax will bring into the State General Fund $450 million in 2026-27 and $900 million annually thereafter. It is also estimated to increase revenues for local jurisdictions by $560 million in 2026-27 (one-half year) and by $1.1 billion per year thereafter. While there was a large coalition seeking exemption from the tax for health care providers, no exemptions were included. The California Department of Tax and Fee Assessment, which is responsible for developing and implementation regulations related to the new tax, scheduled a stakeholder meeting to review the measure and discuss draft regulations, which have not yet been released. *(more)*

Sales and Use Tax on Software *(continued)*	Their stakeholder meeting is set for **September 10, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**, in Room SE 245, Southeast Tower, May Lee State Office Complex: 651 Bannon Street, Sacramento, CA. There is also an online option at: Microsoft Teams (Meeting ID: 262 066 325 671 630, Passcode: FB2kD2BW) or by calling 1-916-535-0987 and then entering the conference identification number 377 043 685#.
AG's Case on Meta's Impact on the Mental Health of Children	The main argument in Attorney General Rob Bonta's case against Meta is this: *Meta designed a dangerous product for young users, knew it to be dangerous, and lied about how dangerous it was. The attorneys general of California, Colorado, Kentucky, and New Jersey are litigating this trial.* The lawsuit, filed in 2023, alleges that Meta, among other things, designed and deployed harmful features on Instagram and Facebook that drive excessive use by children and teens to their mental and physical detriment, all the while misleading users, their families, and the public regarding the existence and severity of these risks. According to the case, "Meta designed Facebook and Instagram to keep kids on the platforms longer and longer — to the point of physical and mental harm. Exploiting our most vulnerable residents to boost corporate profits is not only morally wrong, but it's also illegal." Excessive time spent online is associated with depression, anxiety, eating disorders, susceptibility to addiction, and interference with daily life — including learning. Additional time that young people spend online is associated with an increased severity in symptoms of depression. Increasing evidence shows that these companies are and have been aware of the adverse mental health consequences imposed on underage users. The lawsuit alleges Meta illegally collected and used the data of children under the age of 13 who used its platforms, made decisions in designing its platforms that drove excessive use and put young users at risk, and that it lied to users, their families, and the public about the safety of Facebook and Instagram. In doing so, it violated federal and state laws, including the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, California's False Advertising Law, and California's Unfair Competition Law.