

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

**COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (CPHS)
CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY (CalHHS)**

Friday, April 24, 2026
8:30 a.m.

Members

Catherine Hess, PhD, Chair
Larry Dickey, MD, MPH,
Vice Chair

Juan Ruiz, MD, DrPH, MPH
Maria Dinis, PhD, MSW
Laura Lund, MA
Philip Palacio, EdD, MS
John Schaeuble, PhD, MS
Allen Azizian, PhD
Maria Ventura, PhD
Jonni Johnson, PhD
David Lang, PhD
Lemeneh Tefera, MD, MSc

Remote Attendees

Maria Dinis, PhD, MSW
Juan Ruiz, MD, DrPH, MPH
David Lang, PhD

Alternate Member

Millard Murphy, JD

Zoom:

[CPHS April 24, 2026, Full
Committee Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 161 563 8112
Passcode: 091507

Location:

Office of Technology
and solutions integration
(OTSI)
2870 Gateway Oaks
Drive, Suite 200,
Conference Room
2SW19, 2nd Floor,
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York)

Meeting ID: 161 563 8112

MINUTES

CDII

Agnieszka Rykaczewska,
Deputy Director

CPHS Administrator

Agnieszka Rykaczewska, PhD

Committee Members Present in Person:

Larry Dickey, MD, MPH
Jonni Johnson, PhD
Maria Ventura, PhD
Catherine Hess, PhD
Philip Palacio, EdD, MS
John Schaeuble, PhD, MS
Lemeneh Tefera, MD, MSc
Laura Lund, MA

Committee Members Present Remotely:

Maria Dinis, PhD, MSW
Juan Ruiz, MD, DrPH, MPH
David Lang, PhD

CPHS Staff Present in Person:

Agnieszka Rykaczewska, PhD
Sussan Atifeh
Nicholas Zadrozna

CalHHS Staff Present in Person:

Adam Dondro

Also, Present Principal Investigators and Associate Investigators Remotely:

Lindsey Richland (University of California Irvine)
Maryam Cheraghi (University of California Irvine)
Ella Rose (University of California Irvine)
Jane Allen (Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International)

A. Welcome**a) Chair Updates/ Welcome**

Dr. Larry Dickey, CPHS Vice Chair and Acting Chair, called the meeting to order. Sussan Atifeh conducted roll call and confirmed that a quorum was established. Dr. Dickey then acknowledged that CPHS has several administrative items that need to be addressed by Adam Dondro, CalHHS Chief Information Officer and Director of the Office of Technology and Solutions Integration (OTSI).

B. Swearing in of Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) Chair**a) Swearing in ceremony of CPHS Chair**

Adam Dondro administered the oath of office to Dr. Hess for the CPHS Chair position, following her endorsement by California Health and Human Services Secretary Kim Johnson. He expressed his appreciation to Dr. Dickey for stepping in as Acting Chair over the past several months, and he thanked Dr. Hess for assuming the role of CPHS Chair.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

C. Update on Potential Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS)

Regulations

Adam Dondro informed the committee that since CPHS transitioned to OTSI, he has gained a deeper understanding of the Committee's work and expressed his appreciation to all members for their contributions. When CPHS moved from the Center for Data Insights and Innovation (CDII) to OTSI, he learned that CPHS had developed a set of proposed regulations that had been pending for a significant period of time. Adam committed to looking further into the proposed regulations to provide the committee with a clear answer.

Dr. Dickey, Dr. Hess, and CPHS Administrator Dr. Rykaczewska met with Adam to provide additional context regarding the regulations. Adam noted that it is clear how critical CPHS's role is in safeguarding the people of California, ensuring that research is conducted with integrity, and protecting privacy and the individuals involved. He expressed appreciation for the thoughtful perspectives that informed the draft regulations.

Adam explained that OTSI has never undertaken a regulatory process and needed to assess what such an effort would entail. Drafting regulations, he noted, is often the easiest step. Once drafted, regulations must undergo extensive legal review, policy analysis, economic impact assessment, and a public notice period with substantial opportunities for public comment. Every public comment requires a formal written response, which must be reviewed by OTSI's legal team, the agency's legal team, and sometimes additional entities.

Given the intensity of this process, Adam informed the committee that OTSI does not currently have the resources to move forward with the proposed regulations. Taking on such a project would require additional staffing and support, which OTSI does not presently have. However, he encouraged continued discussion and emphasized that his goal was to provide clarity so the regulations would not remain unresolved in the background.

The discussion was then opened to committee comments and concerns.

Ms. Lund asked what would happen to the substantial work completed by the subcommittee. Adam recommended keeping the work accessible and tracking instances where the proposed regulations would have been relevant. This would allow CPHS to maintain a record of projects affected by the issues the regulations aimed to address, which could be valuable if the regulatory effort is revisited in the future.

Dr. Rykaczewska acknowledged that although the regulations will not move forward at this time, the concerns raised by the committee have already prompted increased conversations across departments. Even without formal regulations, the process has elevated awareness of key issues.

Dr. Dickey expressed appreciation that Adam emphasized this is not the end of the discussion and that the underlying issues remain important.

Dr. Dinis noted that, in her experience, significant action often occurs only after a major issue arises, at which point resources and attention become available.

Dr. Johnson asked whether, if CalHHS does not pursue regulations at the agency level, responsibility would shift to individual centers to determine how they regulate their own data. She noted that this could require more resources later and asked whether CPHS would be involved in those planning efforts. Adam responded that this has not yet been discussed but

agreed that responsibility would likely fall to individual centers releasing data. He committed to thinking further about what this might look like, given OTSI's role in supporting departments from an agency data perspective. Dr. Hess added that consistency across CalHHS would be beneficial. Adam noted that such consistency could be achieved through guidance rather than formal regulations.

Dr. Schaeuble raised a concern that CPHS may eventually face situations where reviewers encounter limitations due to the absence of regulations. He emphasized that he does not want to be placed in a position where he is expected to approve a protocol that does not meet what he considers an appropriate ethical standard for review.

There were no public comments on this agenda item.

E. Review and Approve of Meeting Minutes

Dr. Hess asked whether there were any comments from committee members or any public comments regarding the meeting minutes from the February 6, 2026, Full Board Meeting. Dr. Rykaczewska noted that Dr. Schaeuble had provided feedback regarding the counts on page 11, and those counts have been corrected. There were no questions or comments from either the committee or the public.

Motion: It was moved by Dr. Dickey and seconded by Dr. Ventura to approve February 6, 2026, Full Board Committee Meeting Minutes.

Approve: Dr. Dickey, Dr. Ventura, Dr. Dinis, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Lang, Dr. Ruiz, Dr, Schaeuble, Dr. Tefera

Oppose: None

Abstain: Ms. Lund, Dr. Palacio

Absent: Dr. Azizian

Total=10, In Favor-8, Opposed-0, Abstained-2

F. Projects with Reported Adverse Events and/or Deviations

None.

G. New Projects – Full Committee Review Required

1) Project #	2026-055 (Tefera)
Title:	Evaluation of The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch (SAPB) Youth Cannabis Prevention Media Campaign
PI:	Kim Hayes, MPH Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International
Decision:	Deferred Approved Pending Conditions – Designee Review

Discussion:

The Chair recused herself from participating in the review and discussion of the project due to a conflict of interest but remained in the room after the Committee agreed she could stay as long as she did not participate in the project discussion and only responded to direct questions if needed.

The research team provided an overview of the project. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has implemented a media campaign to prevent and reduce cannabis use among youth in California. The campaign targets two groups: youth and parents or caregivers. CDPH is developing new advertising materials and has contracted with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International to conduct a three-year evaluation of both the existing and upcoming campaign materials.

The evaluation is based on behavior change theory and includes four components. The first component is a series of California and national comparison surveys, including eleven surveys over the project period. These surveys will measure awareness, beliefs, intentions, and potential behavior change among youth ages 13–17, parents and caregivers of youth ages 11–17, and young adults ages 18–20. Recruitment will occur through Dynata, an established panel vendor. National comparison data will support a difference-in-difference analysis to contextualize changes in California.

The second component includes three embedded efficacy studies designed to measure short-term responses to campaign advertisements. The third component is qualitative research, which will be developed later based on gaps identified in the quantitative findings. An amendment will be submitted once the qualitative plan is ready. The fourth component is a social media listening activity using secondary data and does not involve human subjects.

The Primary Reviewer asked the research team to explain recruitment methods, age-group distinctions, and consent procedures. The research team stated that all recruitment will occur through Dynata. Because recruiting teens directly is difficult, youth will primarily be reached through their parents, who will be screened and then asked to pass their device to their child. Youth ages 11–12 will only be recruited through parents, and youth ages 13–17 will mostly be recruited the same way.

The Committee asked about the use of Personal Identifiable Information (PII), specifically birth date and zip code. The research team explained that these data are collected to verify age and state of residence and to ensure eligibility. Zip code will also be used later to analyze campaign awareness across different regions of California. PII will be stored securely at RTI with access limited to trained staff. The research team noted that both RTI staff and the data collection vendor will complete required privacy and security training.

The research team described the consent process, which includes separate consents for parent screeners, parent permission for youth participation, youth screeners, youth assent or consent, and adult screeners and surveys. They acknowledged that the youth consent documents were written at a higher reading level than intended and will submit an amendment to lower the reading level.

The research team also clarified that although the original plan was to remove PII early, zip code will need to be retained longer to complete geographic analyses and respond to CDPH questions. After this analysis is finalized, the data will be deleted.

The Primary Reviewer stated that the consent and PII procedures were thoughtfully designed and appreciated the commitment to revising the youth consent documents, and the discussion was opened to the Committee and the public.

A Committee member asked whether data collected by Dynata would remain on Dynata servers. The research team stated that their understanding is that Dynata does not retain data after transferring to RTI and agreed to confirm this with the Committee.

The Committee asked whether zip codes from individuals who do not qualify for the study would be kept. The research team clarified that RTI only receives data from participants who screen into the study and that the zip codes collected are 5-digit codes.

A Committee member recommended that the consent forms more clearly describe sensitive topics included in the survey, such as racial and ethnic identity and sexual identity. The research team agreed to revise the consent documents to explicitly mention these topics. They noted that the detailed race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity items are required by CDPH and state law.

The Committee also asked how the research team will ensure data quality given known concerns about online survey panels. The research team described several measures, including attention-check items, speed checks, and new questions designed to detect when a parent completes a youth survey. Respondents who fail these checks or indicate that a parent completed the survey will be excluded. The research team acknowledged limitations of panel data but stated that weighting procedures will help align the sample with the California population.

A Committee member asked how consent is documented. The research team explained that participants provide consent by selecting a checkbox at the bottom of the electronic form, and that this acknowledgment is retained as documentation of written consent. The Committee confirmed that electronic acknowledgment meets the requirement for written consent.

The Committee asked whether interviews and social media listening were included in the current approval. The research team clarified that social media listening involves secondary data provided by the media agency and does not involve human subjects. They also confirmed that qualitative interviews are not yet developed and will be submitted later as an amendment.

A Committee member asked about participant reimbursement. The research team explained that incentives for qualitative interviews will be determined later and will likely be gift cards, depending on the recruitment organization. They confirmed that an amendment will be submitted once those plans are finalized. For Dynata surveys, incentives range from \$0.25 to \$4.50 per completed survey, depending on the participant's chosen reward type within the Dynata panel system. The research team clarified that they do not control Dynata's incentive structure.

The CPHS Administrator noted that if Dynata retains any data, a data security letter will be required to confirm that Dynata meets security standards. The research team agreed to verify whether Dynata stores any data.

No public comments were received.

Motion: Dr. Tefera moved and Dr. Ventura seconded to grant the project a deferred approval for one year with minimal risk pending the following specified revisions, which require expedited review and approval by a CPHS subcommittee of Dr. Tefera.

- 1) **An amendment describing the use of zip code and when the zip code data will be removed**
- 2) **Amendments to the reading levels for the adolescent consent documents**
- 3) **Confirmation that the researcher's vendor will scrub data and only the researchers will be housing the data, and include a data security letter from the vendor**
- 4) **The protocol will note that subsequent amendments will be submitted once interview methods and related incentive structures for participants will be formalized**
- 5) **Changing the consent documents to include racial/ethnic identity and sexual identity as potentially sensitive topics in the surveys**

Approve: Dr. Tefera, Dr. Ventura, Dr. Dickey, Dr. Dinis, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Lang, Dr. Palacio, Dr. Ruiz, Dr. Schaeuble

Oppose: None

Abstain: Ms. Lund

Absent: Dr. Azizian

Total=10, In Favor-9, Opposed-0, Abstained-1

2) Project #	2026-004 (Johnson)
Title:	University of California, Irvine (UCI) Child Development Study
PI:	Lindsey Richland, PhD
Board Decision:	Approved

Discussion:

The Principal Investigator (PI) introduced herself and her team and described that her lab conducts child development research focused on understanding how children develop thinking and reasoning skills at home and at school. The PI explained that developmental research often has a narrow view of children's home experiences, and the goal of this project is to recruit a diverse sample of children and families in Orange County. The PI stated that the tasks used in their studies are "fun, game-like," "very low-risk," and involve problem solving, memory, and parent survey questions about activities in the home. The PI clarified that the request is for birth records solely to send mailers to families, and that families who choose to participate will contact the research team directly and provide their own information. The PI emphasized that they will not take any information from the birth records and put it directly into their database.

The Committee explained that the main focus of CPHS review is the request for birth and death data for recruitment. It was noted that the specific study for which recruitment permission is being sought has already been approved by the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Committee stated that it reviewed the recruitment materials, the proposal for linkage to prevent contacting bereaved families, and the data elements requested. It was clarified that the study is very streamlined, the research team requested only the minimal data necessary, and that the plan to avoid contacting families with any indication of mortality is the safest approach. It was also noted that individuals contacted through CDPH birth data are

redirected to enter their own information into the recruitment database, at which point UCI's data are no longer related to birth data.

The Committee explained that CPHS used to review studies that had ever touched state data, even after the link to state data was severed. The Committee Member stated that approximately seven years ago, CPHS and CDPH legal counsel clarified that CPHS has purview only when state data are involved. Therefore, CPHS reviews the recruitment process but does not review the subsequent studies that collect data from individuals who agree to participate.

For clarification about the storage of identifiable state data on portable thumb drives, the research team explained that this storage method was part of the original state requirements. They clarified that the thumb drives are encrypted and stored in a lockbox within a locked office space, and that this method provides an additional level of security.

Committee members discussed the restrictions associated with VSAC data, noting that identifiable Vital Statistics data cannot be shared outside the specific research team named in the approved VSAC application and cannot be reused for subsequent studies. Each new study wishing to use the same recruitment pool must submit its own application so VSAC can evaluate its scientific purpose.

The Committee noted that the Spanish version of the recruitment information had already been approved by CPHS member reviewing the Spanish translations.

No comments were received from the public about this project.

Motion: Dr. Johnson moved, and Ms. Lund seconded, to approve the project for one year as Minimal Risk, with the clarification that the committee's review was limited to the recruitment materials and the strategy for participation in the database, and did not include the specific study procedures, which were reviewed separately by UCI's IRB.

Approve: Dr. Johnson, Ms. Lund, Dr. Dickey, Dr. Dinis, Dr. Lang, Dr. Palacio, Dr. Ruiz, Dr. Schaeuble, Dr. Tefera, Dr. Ventura.

Oppose: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Dr. Azizian.

Total=10, In Favor-10, Opposed-0, Abstained-0

H. Full Board Continuing Review

None.

I. Amendments – Full Committee Review Required

None.

J. Second Review Calendar

None.

K New Projects – Expedited Review Requested

Some projects listed may have been approved by expedited review prior to this meeting and were not reviewed by the full committee.

Total Project Count (11)

L. Projects Requiring Continuing Review

Some projects listed may have been approved by expedited review prior to this meeting and were not reviewed by the full committee.

Total Project Count (29)

L1. Projects Requiring Continuing Review- Administrative Action Taken

Some projects listed may have been approved by expedited review prior to this meeting and were not reviewed by the full committee.

Total Project Count (137)

M. Amendments – Projects with Revisions Approves through Expedited Review

Some projects listed may have been approved by expedited review prior to this meeting and were not reviewed by the full committee.

Total Project Count (33)

N. Projects with Request for CPHS to Rely on Another IRB

None.

O. Exemption/Not Research Approvals

Total Project Count (29)

P. Final Reports

Total Project Count (11)

Q. Public Comments

None.

R. Next Meeting

The next CPHS meeting is scheduled to be held on Friday, June 5th, 2026.

R. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 10:47 AM on April 24th, 2026.