

HHSA Community Update - August 2026

A quarterly update from the Sacramento County Health & Human Services Agency

This update shares highlights from across our health, social services, early childhood, behavioral health, and housing programs. These updates shine a light on community partnerships, services, and issues that directly affect Sacramento County residents. We invite your ideas, questions, and perspectives.

What We're Working On

Strengthening Support for Children, Families & Older Adults



CPS is preparing for the rollout of CWS-CARES, California's new statewide child welfare case management system. This upgrade will modernize tools used to support children and families. Counties are actively working with the State to set a timeline for launching the new system, as some features have been delayed and need further development.

Thanks to funding from the Community Care Expansion and Preservation Initiative provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Senior & Adult Services (SAS) has been able to keep

100 licensed residential care beds available for older adults. In addition, 39 new beds are currently being added through contracts. These efforts help ensure that older adults can stay in safe, stable housing.

Expanding Access to Health & Behavioral Health Care

The Board approved the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plan on June 9, 2026. The plan is now online and available for the public to access.

The Sacramento County Health Center (SCHC) is expanding School-Based Health Centers, especially focusing on mental health support for students. In the coming months, SCHC expects to operate at 67 school sites, increasing early intervention and equitable behavioral health care for students in underserved communities.

Adult Correctional Health recently renovated a unit, adding 24 acute psychiatric beds and 7 step-down beds within the jail. This expansion has greatly improved timely access to acute psychiatric care.

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) recently received a grant to support people participating in Prop 36 Mental Health Diversion. To speed up assessments and help connect individuals to community services faster, BHS is working with Correctional Health to set up telehealth booths and equipment within the jail.

DHS has received Board approval to partner with WellSpace Health 988, Bay Area Community Services Community Wellness Response Team (CWRT), the Sacramento Regional Fire/EMS Communications Center, and local law enforcement agencies. This partnership will create a two-way referral system for both 911 and 988 calls, so people in the community can quickly get the right support and response when they need help.

New Behavioral Health programs have launched to meet a range of needs. The Healthy Beginnings Perinatal Program, which started on July 1, 2026, offers outpatient treatment for substance use disorders, residential care, and sober living support specifically for pregnant and perinatal women and their children. Additionally, a Peer-Led Integrated Recovery and Housing Pilot will begin in August 2026, providing recovery and stable housing services for justice-involved individuals living with severe mental illness or co-occurring substance use disorders.



Sacramento County's Behavioral Health team, together with Probation staff, youth attorneys, and the presiding judge, took part in the Transforming Juvenile Probation Certificate Program offered by Georgetown University and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The partners are working to design a project that will improve prevention, diversion, and re-entry services for youth throughout Sacramento County.

Sacramento County Public Health has welcomed Dr. Phuong Luu as the new Health Officer and Division Director. With measles cases on the rise, families are encouraged to make sure their children are vaccinated before returning to school. To keep local healthcare providers updated on this and other public health issues, Dr. Luu will begin sharing monthly reports.

Expanding & Improving Homeless Services & Housing Programs

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) options for behavioral health clients are expanding. In May 2026, Madison Square Studios began leasing 118 affordable apartments, with 15 units specifically set aside for Behavioral Health clients. This addition brings the total PSH portfolio to 529 units across 21 developments, helping to address housing needs in the community.

The Department of Homeless Services and Housing (DHS) has partnered with Sacramento SPCA staff to find better ways to support unhoused residents who have pets. DHS and its outreach providers are committed to making sure pet-friendly accommodations are available, so individuals are not forced to leave their animals behind in order to access services.

DHSH is bringing on new contractors to improve services. VOA (Volunteers of America) now manages Mather Community Campus programs for singles, families, and TAY, with support from experienced former Next Move staff. Starting September 1, Five Keys will operate the Florin Safe Stay, leveraging ten years of Bay Area expertise and adding staff who previously worked for City Net.

Food & Healthcare Assistance

CalFresh work requirements and community engagement launched on June 1, 2026. DHA trained staff, updated policies, and improved workflows to support statewide changes. CDSS expanded exemptions for children under 14 and will automate many determinations starting August 2026. The State allocated \$20 million to help counties through 2027. CDSS also created a toolkit to help counties and partners educate customers about H.R. 1 and upcoming changes. DHA reviews these materials for ongoing outreach.



DHA and DHS are preparing for Medi-Cal work requirements under H.R. 1, set to begin in 2027. A community group has been meeting alongside the County to promote understanding of these changes and strategize about how to support community members in meeting the new requirements.

The CalFresh Error Rate Action Team is focused on improving case accuracy and reducing payment errors in Sacramento County. Key efforts include staff training, quality checks, and reviewing common mistakes. The county's payment error rate is now 3.31%, one of the lowest among Payment Accuracy Measurement Consortium (PMC) counties.

Community Engagement Opportunities



Sacramento County Health Authority (SCHA): Governing and oversight body for Medi-Cal managed care in the county.

<https://dhs.saccounty.gov/us/en/administration/boards-and-commissions/sacramento-county-health-authority.html#gsc.tab=0>

Commission Meetings: First Monday every other month, 3–5 PM
Committees: Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance; Consumer Protection

Behavioral Health Commission (BHC): Supports transparency and community involvement in behavioral health. <https://dhs.saccounty.gov/us/en/behavioral-health/boards-and-committees/behavioral-health-commission.html#gsc.tab=0>

Commission Meetings: Third Wednesday each month, 6–8 PM. Committees: Executive; Adult Prevention & Treatment; Youth Prevention & Treatment; Crisis & Justice Involved Continuum

Board of Supervisors Workshop on Homelessness: Scheduled for August 25 at 2 PM, will focus on outcomes and key performance indicators across homeless and housing programs. Public may participate in-person or virtually and provide input before or during the workshop.

Stories & Celebrations

Celebrating Youth Resilience

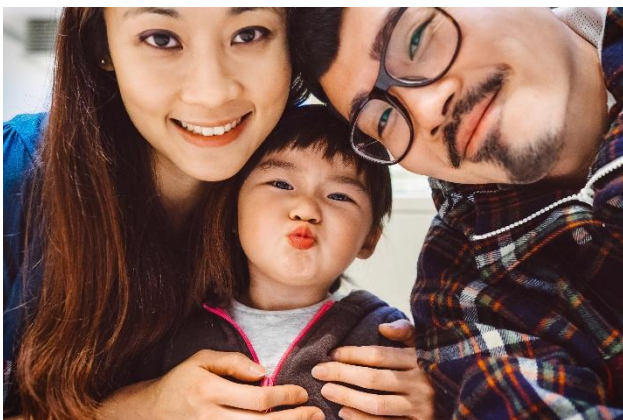
Nine foster youth completed the Empower Forward program, a collaboration with 3Strands Global Foundation that supports youth who are at risk of, or are experiencing, commercial sexual exploitation. The pilot offered opportunities to build essential life skills and connect with education and employment resources, while providing a safe space to engage with services. The positive outcomes for these nine participants highlight the program’s meaningful impact on the foster youth who were able to take part and remain engaged.



From Incarceration to Inspiration: Kaylee’s Journey of Transformation

Coordinated jail-based substance use programming equips incarcerated individuals with practical coping tools and a supportive environment for recovery. Kaylee is one of the people who participated in CORE’s programming at the Main Jail along with the Sobriety Sisters Mentorship Program, which provided daily accountability, individualized reentry planning, and continued support after her release. Together, these programs helped her sustain sobriety, secure stable housing, continue her education, and become active in her community. Just 15 months after entering jail, Kaylee’s life reflects the powerful impact of aligned jail and community partnerships.

Trends, Data & Insights



Behavioral Health’s Community Wellness Response Team recorded 257 crisis responses in April, its highest monthly total to date.

The Potter the Otter exhibit drew over 42,000 visitors during its five-month run, with nearly 2,000 children and caregivers receiving free admission on monthly free-days—extending the reach of First 5 Sacramento’s Help Me Grow and Sac Family Connect programs through onsite engagement and permanent museum banners.

Looking Ahead

Several key initiatives and milestones are on the horizon as HHSA continues strengthening services across the county.

August 2026: Behavioral Health Services, in coordination with the District Attorney's and Public Defender Office's, is launching a new pilot program, Peer-Led Integrated Recovery and Housing, for participants of the DA's CORE Program. This is a 25-bed diversion program that combines up to 18 months of sober living with intensive substance use and mental health treatment.



August 27, 2026: Jail Master Planning – The County is hosting a **community webinar** on **Thursday, August 27, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom**. The webinar is open to everyone in the community. Registration is required. **Register here:**

https://us05web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SkRjOT4KQAUe3o-UHMR2Ug

During the webinar, we will discuss:

- An overview of the Jail System Master Planning process
- Expected outcomes and the project timeline
- A summary of community input received to date
- Opportunities to provide additional written feedback as the Jail System Master Planning effort moves toward completion

September 8-11, 2026: The Board of Supervisors will be considering the final budget for FY 26/27. Advisory Board input should be provided in advance in writing or during public comment on September 8.

October 2026: CWS-CARES, California's new child welfare case management system, is scheduled to launch statewide on October 26, with CPS and DCFAS staff training underway ahead of the go-live.

Late 2026 – Early 2027

Senior & Adult Services will release the first Local Aging & Disability-Friendly Action Plan (LADAP) Newsletter, highlighting local aging-friendly initiatives and expansion work.

Empower Youth Center, a new 34-bed Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) serving ages 5-21 will become operational by the end of FY 26-27.

Health Services will be launching an RFP process to streamline some of the behavioral health crisis continuum services. More information will be provided as this evolves.