



## Findings from CHCF's Inland Empire Regional Market Report

Thursday, June 11, 2026

### Speaker Biographies

**Megan Barajas, MPA**, is the regional vice president for the Inland Empire at the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC), representing hospitals across Riverside and San Bernardino counties. She leads regional policy and advocacy efforts on HASC's strategic priorities, including behavioral health and emergency medical services, and is a key driver behind multi-agency initiatives that strengthen hospital operations and care delivery. Barajas works closely with hospital executives, county departments, managed care plans, and elected officials to advance policies that support access, coordination, and sustainability across the health care system. She is recognized for building consensus among diverse stakeholders and leading collaborative solutions that improve patient care and system performance across the Inland Empire.

Barajas has a master of public administration degree from the University of Massachusetts Global and a bachelor's degree in business administration and organizational leadership from Brandman University.

**Kara Carter, MBA, MSc**, is senior vice president of strategy and programs at the California Health Care Foundation, where she develops strategies, provides overall guidance, and leads the program teams in the development, execution, and assessment of CHCF's work. In this role, Carter provides thought leadership and support to CHCF's grantmaking programs and priorities, as well as CHCF's program-related investments and its learning and impact functions.

Before joining CHCF, Carter was a partner at McKinsey & Company's San Francisco and London offices. She was a leader in McKinsey's Medicaid practice in the US, and supported public and private sector health systems in the US, UK, and Europe to improve quality, access, and affordability. Before joining McKinsey, Carter worked for UK-based philanthropic institutions on a broad range of topics related to poverty and community action. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, a master's in social anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a master's in business administration from the

London Business School. Carter currently serves on the UC Davis Health National Advisory Board.

**Dolores L. Green, MBA**, has been with the Riverside County Medical Association (RCMA) for over 45 years, serving as its CEO and CEO of its affiliated organizations – California Foundation for Medical Care, Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care, and Riverside County Physicians Memorial Foundation. Green also served as the CEO of the Inland Empire Health Information Exchange until its merger into a statewide HIE now called Manifest MedEx. She currently serves on the board of directors of Manifest MedEx and is the managing director of the Inland Empire Health Information Organization.

Currently the RCMA represents over 3,500 practicing physicians, residents, and medical students in Riverside County. Green was instrumental in the planning, development, and implementation of programs under the RCMA's subsidiary 501(c) 3 including its Medical Student Scholarship Program, Project K.I.N.D (Kids in Need of Doctors), and the Inland Empire Palliative Care Coalition. As CEO of the Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care, Green oversees its PPO, EPO, and workers' compensation network activities, managing a network of 35,000 contracted providers in every county in California; its Quality Improvement Programs; and its Pathway to Transformation Initiative, which includes a Population Health Fellowship program and a Population Health Management Academy.

Green represents all these organizations at the local, state, and national levels. She has served on the boards of many national and state professional organizations, including the American Association of Medical Society Executives, the California Medical Executives Conference, Physicians Peer Review, Inc., the Health Care Administrators Association, and the Health Care Foundation of Southern California. She has served as a board member of the American Association of PPOs and the Health Care Administrators Association, including serving as president and various officer positions, and she previously served on the NORCAL Advisory Council of NORCAL Mutual Insurance Company and the National CME Council. Green received her undergraduate degree in business from California State University, San Bernardino, and her MBA degree in business/finance from the University of Redlands.

**Marian Mulkey, MPP, MPH**, has worked since 2017 as an independent consultant to foundations, the public sector, and nonprofit organizations, focusing on California's health insurance market and uninsured population, federal-state dynamics in health policy, and regulatory oversight of health insurance in California. Illustrative consulting projects include the design and facilitation of customized health policy training academies for state agencies including CalPERS and Covered California; coordination of the consulting team that supported the 2020-22 Healthy California for All Commission as it explored unified health care financing

options for California; and qualitative research to describe local health care delivery systems and inform state policy to improve health care access, affordability, quality, and equity. From 1999-2016, Mulkey held progressively responsible positions at the California Health Care Foundation where, among other roles, she directed CHCF's work to support and inform California state agencies and leaders as they implemented initiatives under the Affordable Care Act.

Mulkey holds a bachelor of arts degree from Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and master's degrees in public health and public policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Thomas Pham, MPH**, understands what it means to grow up in a challenging environment. He also knows the incredible impact that comes when individuals and families see hope on the horizon. Pham has made it his life's work to help every resident of the Inland Empire find their path to a healthy and joyful life. His greatest passion is helping those who face the greatest obstacles or are furthest from equity.

As the vice president of strategy at Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), Pham develops and executes IEHP's strategy system to advance the organization's mission and achieve their bold 2030 vision. He leads the creation and implementation of IEHP's multi-year strategic plan and ensures the health of the entire strategy portfolio. He is responsible for the research of internal and external insights that help accelerate the organization's success and establish new strategic business opportunities. In addition, he leads the membership growth strategy, including new enrollment and member retention. He is constantly seeking new ways to expand IEHP's ability to serve the Inland Empire communities. Pham received a master's degree in public health with an emphasis in healthcare administration from Loma Linda University and a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles.

**Kristof Stremikis, MPP, MPH**, is director of the California Health Care Foundation's Market Analysis and Insight team, which promotes greater transparency and accountability in California's health care system. He oversees the foundation's work to provide research and analysis to policymakers and other health leaders across the state to give a market-wide view of the complex health care ecosystem and to support informed decisions about California's health care landscape.

Stremikis previously served as associate director for policy at the Pacific Business Group on Health, where he also oversaw the Purchaser Value Network. Earlier, he spent six years at the Commonwealth Fund as senior researcher to the president. He received a bachelor's degree in economics, political science, and history from the University of Wisconsin, Madison; a master's

degree in public policy from UC Berkeley; and a master's degree in health policy and management from Columbia University.

**Denis Vega, MBA**, is chief strategy officer at Community Health Systems, Inc. (CHSI), a Federally Qualified Health Center serving communities across Riverside, San Bernardino, and North San Diego counties. He leads enterprise strategy, growth, and system-wide planning, with oversight of compliance, public policy, pharmacy/340B, and revenue development. Vega's work focuses on expanding access to care across the Inland Empire and strengthening the long-term sustainability of the safety net through service expansion, integrated care models, and community-based initiatives.

Vega holds an MBA from California Baptist University and a bachelor's degree in neuroscience from the University of California, Riverside, and he is currently pursuing a doctor of public health (DrPH) degree at Claremont Graduate University.