**Quality Leaders Awards (QLAs)**

**2025 Application**

Table of Contents

[California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH) and the California Health Care Safety Net Institute (SNI) 2](#_Toc106714218)

[Quality Leaders Awards (QLAs) 2](#_Toc106714219)

[Eligibility Requirements 3](#_Toc106714220)

[Categories 3](#_Toc106714221)

[Scoring 3](#_Toc106714222)

[Application Instructions 4](#_Toc106714223)

[2025 CAPH/SNI Quality Leaders Awards Application Form 5](#_Toc106714224)

[Narrative Description 6](#_Toc106714225)

## California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH) and the California Health Care Safety Net Institute (SNI)

CAPH represents [California’s 17 public health care systems](https://caph.org/memberdirectory/about-californias-public-health-care-systems/), which include county-affiliated systems and the five University of California academic medical centers. Together, these systems form the core of the state’s health care safety net. They primarily serve individuals from underrepresented communities, including persons of color, individuals experiencing financial hardship or homelessness, and individuals with complex social and medical needs. Across public health care systems, nearly 60% of patients identify as persons of color. As a trade association, CAPH advances policy and advocacy efforts that strengthen the capacity of its members to ensure access to comprehensive, high quality, culturally sensitive health care services for all Californians, regardless of insurance status, ability to pay, or other circumstance, and educate the next generation of health care professionals.

These efforts are strongly informed by, and take place alongside, the work of SNI, the performance improvement affiliate of CAPH. Since 1999, SNI has provided California’s public health care systems with expert-led program offerings, hands-on technical assistance, and peer-learning opportunities, while working hand-in-hand with CAPH. Today, SNI supports California’s public health care systems by informing and shaping statewide and national health care policy, by providing performance measurement and reporting expertise, and by accelerating and supporting decision-making and learning, within and across member systems.

## Quality Leaders Awards (QLAs)

California’s public health care systems serve more than 3.7 million patients annually. They deliver extraordinary levels of service to those most in need, including inpatient and outpatient care and essential community services such as emergency, trauma, and burn care. For more than 20 years, CAPH/SNI has honored the outstanding work across these public health care systems with the Quality Leaders Awards (QLAs). The goals of the QLAs are to:

* Showcase forward-thinking and innovative approaches in California’s public health care systems to address the health needs of the communities they serve;
* Encourage the spread of effective strategies that improve and advance high-quality, equitable health care; and
* Recognize the dedicated and talented professionals working in public health care systems.

**The QLAs will be presented at the CAPH/SNI Annual Conference, the theme of which is *Anchors of Care Amidst Waves of Change*, which will take place on December 3-5, 2025.**

## Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a QLA:

* The improvement initiative must be led by the public health care system that is a [member of CAPH](https://caph.org/about/members/). County and community partners may be involved in any award category (e.g., criminal justice, health plans, community-based organizations).

## Categories

The improvement initiative must be an outstanding effort that fits into one or more of the following categories:

* **Equity:** Addresses inequities in underserved populations by advancing organizational and/or health equity improvement efforts.
* **Population Health:** Improves population health by using data-driven approaches to identify and address multiple drivers of health outcomes.
* **Care Redesign:** Redesigns care processes in a way that increases efficiency, advances clinical quality, and enhances the patient experience.
* **Innovation:** Demonstrates innovation in technology, models of care, and/or system transformation that improves health outcomes and care delivery.
* **Transformational Partnership** *(new category!)***:** Collaborates with an external entity (such as health plans, community-based organizations, social services or behavioral health departments) to improve care or access to care.

In addition, all applicants will be considered for the **Top Honor,** which recognizes an outstanding effort to improve patient care that demonstrates achievement across multiple award categories.

## Scoring

Scoring is based on the following criteria, each with equal weight, by a panel of external judges and CAPH/SNI staff:

* **Scope:** What is the significance of the problem being addressed by the improvement initiative? What is the impact of the problem on patients and/or the public health care system (e.g., morbidity/mortality, cost, etc.)?
* **Design:** How comprehensive was the overall design and interventions? How were patients and other community stakeholders involved in designing the initiative?
* **Effectiveness**: What are the demonstrated improvements in care processes and outcomes?
* **Integration**: To what extent does the initiative improve care integration across settings or providers?
* **Spread:** Has the program been adopted or spread to other parts of the public health care system or to other member systems?

## Application Instructions

*Completed entries must include:*

* Cover sheet with CEO or CEO-designee signature (page 5)
* Narrative description (page 6)
* Digital materials in the form of 5-10 photos, or video footage (if available) of the initiative in action, **with captions**. Send photos to Natalie Sainz individually, in an image format (.jpg, .png, etc.), and NOT embedded in a Word, PDF, or PowerPoint document. If file size is an issue, please reach out to Natalie for access to upload digital materials to a secure folder.
* OPTIONAL: Supporting materials such as research, early successes, and external recognition

Entries are due before end of business **Friday, August 15, 2025,** via email to Natalie Sainz, nsainz@caph.org. Please contact Natalie if you have any questions.

## 2025 CAPH/SNI Quality Leaders Awards Application Form

**CHECKLIST OF MATERIALS:**

1. \_\_\_\_ This cover sheet with CEO (or designee) signature
2. \_\_\_\_ Narrative Description
3. \_\_\_\_ 5-10 digital photos or video footage depicting improvement in action *(optional)*
4. \_\_\_\_ Charts and graphs *(optional)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title of Improvement Initiative/Entry:  |  |
| CAPH Member Institution:  |  |
| Name of contact person for this entry:  |  |
| Contact person’s title/ job description:  |  |
| Phone number for contact person:  |  |
| Email for contact person:  |  |
| Category (check at least one) | \_\_\_ Equity\_\_\_ Population Health\_\_\_ Care Redesign\_\_\_ Innovation\_\_\_ Transformational Partnership |
| *If your project is chosen for a QLA award, we will need to contact someone from your communications team for video and media coordination. Please identify someone from your system to fill this roll.* |
| Name and title of contact person: |  |
| Email for contact person:  |  |

**CEO or Designated Hospital Administrator:**

I certify that this entry has been reviewed and approved.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name/Title: |  |
| Signature: | Date: |  |

## Narrative Description

Responses to the following questions **should not exceed three pages**.

**Abstract**

1. Please summarize the improvement effort in 200 words or less. Describe the problem being addressed and how the initiative was designed and implemented and provide quantitative data showing the impact of the initiative within a specified time period.

**Scope**

1. What was the opportunity that the improvement initiative was designed to address? What was the impact of the problem on patients and on the public health care system?

**Design**

1. What activities took place as part of the improvement effort? (e.g., staffing, workflow changes, training/education, implementation, communications, etc.)
2. How did the initiative gain buy-in from stakeholders, including staff, patients and/or the community?
3. Did you encounter challenges (anticipated or unanticipated) and how were they addressed? How did the design change over time, if applicable?

**Effectiveness**

1. What are the demonstrated improvements in care processes and/or outcomes? Please include quantitative data demonstrating the improvements over a specified period of time.
2. Please share qualitative results. Include a patient story if you are able.

**Integration**

1. How did the initiative improve care integration and/or coordination for patients across settings and/or providers? What key partnerships or collaborations were improved that led to the success of the program?

**Spread**

1. Has the program or aspects of the program (e.g., workflows, staffing models) spread to other parts of the public health care system or to other member systems?